

# Montana's Landless Indians and the Assimilation Era of Federal Indian Policy: A Case of Contradictions

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Lessons for Grades 7–12



# Montana's Landless Indians and the Assimilation Era of Federal Indian Policy: A Case of Contradictions



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# Montana's Landless Indians and the Assimilation Era of Federal Indian Policy: A Case of Contradictions



## How to Use the Lessons

These lessons are designed with the objective of teaching students about the landless Métis, Cree, and Chippewa Indians in Montana between 1889 and 1916, while giving them an opportunity to do their own guided analysis of historical and primary source materials. (**Note:** Alignment to Montana Common Core Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies follows the lessons.)

### Enduring Understandings

After completing these lessons, students will understand that:

1. The landless Indians of Montana come from three primary groups: the Cree, the Chippewa, and the Métis.
2. The press (i.e., the *Anaconda Standard* or *Great Falls Tribune*) played a crucial role in influencing public opinion and government policies regarding the landless Indians.
3. The landless Indians faced extreme prejudice and repeated questions about their legitimacy, making it difficult for them to get federal recognition or aid.
4. The landless Indians worked hard, though not always successfully, to maintain economic independence and to gain political sovereignty.
5. There was a political tension in white culture between the desire to “civilize” the Indians and the racist belief that Indians could not be civilized. Both positions were rooted in a lack of understanding or appreciation for the Indians’ histories and cultures. At the same time, these conflicting ideologies complicated the way that media and politicians responded to Montana’s landless Indians.

No outside materials are required for the lessons, although there is a list of Additional Resources (print, web-based, and museum), if

teachers or students want to do further reading or research. If your class is using the Montana history textbook, *Montana: Stories of the Land*, this lesson would be most useful when you have finished Chapter 15—The Progressive Era. Students would greatly benefit from the background information it provides (see *Montana: Stories of the Land*—Companion Website and Online Teachers Guide: <http://svcalt.mt.gov/education/Textbook/TextbookMainPage.asp>). Also, to assist with comprehension of unfamiliar terms, a link is provided within Part 1—Historical Context to the US Department of the Interior: Indian Affairs FAQs site—<http://www.bia.gov/FAQs/>.

The fourteen lessons are divided into two main parts:

### PART 1, the **Historical Context**

PART 2, the **Analysis Activities** with four sub-groups:

Analysis Activity A—Montana’s Landless Peoples: Cree, Chippewa, and Métis (A-1—A-4)

Analysis Activity B—Cultural Beliefs and White Prejudices (B-1—B-2)

Analysis Activity C—Deportation and Homelessness (C-1—C-3)

Analysis Activity D—A Reservation is Created (D-1—D-4)

- Note the map at the beginning of Part 1—Historical Context, showing areas of utilization in both Canada and the United States by the Métis, Cree, and Chippewa Indians.
- Both the Historical Context and the Analysis Activities contain worksheets and all of the primary source documents and images necessary for analysis.

- The historical and primary source materials are coordinated with the worksheets, organized, and labeled.
- When necessary, a short section of HISTORICAL NOTES is included near the top of the worksheet to provide additional background or contextual information relevant to the primary sources being analyzed.
- Each worksheet contains a series of specific questions tailored to the primary source(s) in order to facilitate the analysis. (For differentiated instruction needs, note which worksheets have fewer and/or less complex documents to be analyzed and questions to be answered.)
- Through the analysis process, students will be able to utilize the historical documents and images to piece together a complex and detailed history of the landless Cree, Chippewa, and Métis in Montana.
- It is vital to read all lessons and view all primary source images and documents ahead of time. They offer unprecedented windows to specific years, often displaying racism and harshness, but also enduring humanity, showing students the reality of the history of landless Indian people in Montana. Viewing those realities through images and documents created between 1880 and 1916 enables students not only to be more authentically informed about the past, but also to understand the contemporary realities for the descendants, many of whom are Montana citizens.

Students may work on the Analysis Activities in pairs or small groups. The advantages of doing the Analysis Activities in pairs or groups are that students in each group can then share the primary source materials, and they can converse about the materials and/or read the documents out loud, which can help students pick up on the tone and content of the material. **Note: It is critical for students' understanding of the material to complete Part 1—Historical Context—the**

**foundation—before going on to the Analysis Activities.**

### **Lesson Implementation Options**

Ideally, this lesson should take six days; however, it can be condensed into one full week with homework.

Students will work in groups for two days, then groups will present in order to the entire class. A summative assignment will be due the day after the presentations.

Optional additional materials: a computer, projector, and screen. These are useful if teacher or presenting students want the class to see the documents being discussed.

Teacher prep: Teacher should read and be familiar with all materials included in this unit. Make copies of primary documents (one per student per corresponding group) and worksheets (one per group A, B, C, D) and one per student for the Historical Context.

### **Day 1: Introduction**

Teacher introduces lesson and makes sure students know what primary source documents are. Entire class works together on the Historical Context portion of the unit. If class does not complete this section entirely on Day 1, teacher should assign it as homework due at the beginning of class on Day 2. Alternatively, teacher could extend this section of the lesson by one day, thereby taking six full days to complete the unit.

### **Days 2 and 3: Group Working Days**

Divide class into four groups: A, B, C, and D. Provide each group with the corresponding worksheets for that lettered group. Provide each student with all of the documents for that group. Make sure students also have their copies of the Historical Context material, as well as answers to the Historical Context Worksheet.

Students will work for two days and take turns reading, discussing, and analyzing each document and filling in the analysis worksheets.

They will need to stay on task to complete the work in two days (estimate two 50-minute periods). They need to be mindful that each student contributes in a meaningful way and is prepared to present their findings to the class.

**Assessment:** When students are finished with all documents and worksheets, they will write a one-page summary. Make sure students also have their copies of the Historical Context material, as well as answers to the Historical Context Worksheet. They will present this summary to the class on Day 4 or 5.

#### **Day 4: Groups A and B Presentation Day**

If students want to show images of documents, particularly photos, to the class, they should let the teacher know in advance and have materials ready to answer the list of summary questions provided for them as part of their group's packet.

Before group presentations begin, distribute a copy of Group A and B summary questions to all students.

Groups A and B will present their findings to the entire class, taking about 8 to 10 minutes to do so (with questions). As each group presents, other students (not in that group) should take thorough notes on each group's findings, using the summary questions to guide them.

At the end of class, Groups A and B will hand in their completed worksheets and their summary of findings. Homework: Each student *not* in the presenting group will write at least two paragraphs explaining what they learned from each presenting group. These will be due the following day at the beginning of class.

#### **Day 5: Groups C and D Presentation Day**

Teacher will collect homework (summaries of Group A and Group B presentations).

Distribute a copy of Group C and D summary questions to all students. Groups C and D present their findings, while students not in the presenting group take thorough notes using the

summary questions to guide them. At the end of their presentations, teacher will collect the analysis worksheets and one-page summaries from Group C and Group D. In class or as homework, have students complete a two-paragraph (or more) summary of what they learned from each group (10 to 12 minutes per summary).

Lead a class discussion about why it took over forty years to create the Rocky Boy Reservation. Point out that not all of the landless Indians were enrolled on the Rocky Boy Reservation (i.e., the Little Shell). Discuss why this might have been.

#### **Unit Assessment**

Students should be assessed on the following activities:

- ✓ Participation in and completion of Historical Context portion of the lesson (10%);
- ✓ Significant and meaningful participation in reading, completing section worksheets, discussing and analyzing group materials, and preparing the summary of findings (30%);
- ✓ Participation in presentation to the class (15%); and
- ✓ Thoughtful and detailed summaries of the other groups' presentations/findings (15% each x 3 = 45%)

**Optional:** Consider preparing a timeline template of the forty-year span these lessons cover and posting it in the classroom to allow each group to contribute to the understanding of the big picture by adding words or pictures to the timeline representing information gained from the group's Analysis Activity. For an even more complete picture, add well-known events in both U.S. and Montana history that were happening at the same time. *For a timeline overview of Montana history, see Montana: Stories of the Land—TIMELINE:* <http://svcalt.mt.gov/education/Textbook/Timeline/textbooktimeline.asp>.



# Montana's Landless Indians and the Assimilation Era of Federal Indian Policy: A Case of Contradictions



## Part 1—Historical Context

### Canadian and U.S. Areas of Utilization by Cree, Chippewa, and Métis People



# Montana's Landless Indians and the Assimilation Era of Federal Indian Policy: A Case of Contradictions



## Landless Indians Timeline

### Time Immemorial

“This is an old, old story about the Crees (Ne-I-yah-wahk). A long time ago the Indians came from far back east (Sah-kahs-to-nok) ... The Indians came from the East not from the West (Pah-ki-si-mo-tahk). This wasn't very fast. I don't know how many years it took for the Indians to move West.” (Joe Small, Government. Ethnic Heritage Studies Program: Plains Indians, Cheyenne-Cree-Crow-Lakota Sioux. Bozeman, MT: Center for Bilingual/Multicultural Education, College of Education, Montana State University, 1982. page 4).

**1851** – Treaty with the Red Lake and Pembina Chippewa included a land cession on both sides of the Red River in Canada.

**1855** – Treaty negotiated with the Mississippi, Pillager, and Lake Winnibigoshish bands of Chippewa Indians. The tribes ceded a portion of their aboriginal lands in the territory of Minnesota and reserved lands for each tribe. The treaty contained a provision for allotment and annuities.

**1863** – Treaty with the Mississippi, Pillager, and Lake Winnibigoshish bands of Chippewa Indians ceded a significant portion of their lands as designated in the 1855 treaty.

**1864** – President Lincoln created the territory of Montana.

**1885** – Louis Riel led a rebellion of Métis and First Nations peoples in the Red River region against the Canadian government in an attempt to establish an independent province. The rebellion failed and Riel was executed for treason. Many who supported his cause fled into Montana.

**1887** – The Montana Territorial Legislature appropriated \$500 for relief for the Cree camped on the Sun River.

**1887** – Congress passed the General Allotment Act (also known as the Dawes Severalty Act). The Dawes Act permitted the federal government to survey reservation land and parcel it out to individual tribal members as allotments; “surplus” land (the land left after the creation of allotments) was then often opened for white settlement. The Act was implemented differently and at different times on different reservations.

**1889** – Montana became a state.

**1893** – Cree camped at Silver Bow suffered an outbreak of scarlet fever.

**1894** – Despite the policy criminalizing the spiritual traditions and ceremonies of tribes, the Cree held a Sun Dance.

**1896** – Congress appropriated \$5,000 to fund the deportation of the Cree from Montana. The 10th Cavalry rounded up landless Indians and escorted them to the Canadian border. Many returned to Montana immediately.

**1896** – Buffalo Coat filed a petition with the court, saying that he and the other Cree that were detained for deportation were not afforded due process of the law. Buffalo Coat claimed U.S. residency since 1885 and noted the number of children in their group that had been born in the United States. A judge determined that the state court did not have authority to give a ruling as the deportation was through an Act of Congress. The deportation to Canada went ahead.

**1908** – 1.2 million acres of land previously set aside for a Chippewa-Cree reservation in Valley County were instead opened to homesteaders.

**1909** – Congress passed the Enlarged Homestead Act, allowing homesteaders to file for 320-acre claims in arid areas where 160 acres would be insufficient to make a living.

**1909** – Rocky Boy's band was ordered to the Blackfeet Reservation; 11,000 acres of 80-acre parcels were set aside for them.

**1910** – Little Bear and other leaders left the Blackfeet Reservation with their bands, claiming the land was insufficient for farming. Rocky Boy and others remained and risked starvation during the winter.

**1912** – Fort Assinniboine by the Bear Paw Mountains was offered as a possible site for a reservation for Rocky Boy's band and other landless Indians.

**1916** – Chief Rocky Boy died on April 18.

**1916** – On September 7, a congressional act designated a tract of land as a refuge for the "homeless and wandering Indians." The land included part of the abandoned Fort Assinniboine Military Reserve. The original bill was to include four townships. Within this land base there were 21 tillable sections, 80 grazing sections, and 12 timbered sections. Unfortunately the bill was approved with one amendment—the removal of one township. The land that was removed included the lower valley of Beaver Creek, which contained the tillable acres. The refuge ended up totaling approximately 56,035 acres. The reservation was named after Chief Rocky Boy as an honor to the departed leader.

**1916** – The first agency school was built.

**1917 to 1920** – A drought ended reservation gardening and eliminated most reservation jobs.

**1931** – The Interior Department encouraged mining on the reservation, granting a 20-year lease to the Bear Paw Mining and Milling Company of Havre to mine gold, lead, silver, copper, and vermiculite. The Bureau of Indian Affairs limited tribal royalties to 7.5 percent.

The tribe derived no income from this arrangement and, in fact, the company failed to pay rent or provide safe working conditions.

**1934** – With a vote of 172 for and 7 against, the Rocky Boy tribes voted to organize under the Indian Reorganization Act, which provided limited powers of self-government.

**1935** – 35,000 acres of land adjacent to the Rocky Boy Reservation was purchased and put in trust for the Chippewa, Cree, and other Indians. It became unclear exactly for whom this land was purchased, as there were still landless Indians in the state. Rather than set up two reservations, it was decided to make the 35,000 acres part of the Rocky Boy reservation, with the tribes' adoption of 25 additional families.

**1936** – Dr. Henry Roe Cloud conducted a census of landless Indians that totaled 550 families representing 3,000 landless Indians eligible for adoption. Eligibility required an Indian blood quantum of one-half or more.

**1936** – The worst drought in the history of the state forced the tribes to sell the 350 cattle they were able to save.

**1944** – Trusting the promise of Havre, Hill County, and the State of Montana to help the Rocky Boy tribes with their land acquisition program, the Chippewa-Cree Tribal Council gave up their claim to Beaver Creek Park. The tribe never received the support promised.

**1934 to 1946** – Additional land was added to the Rocky Boy Reservation, doubling its size to 107,613 acres.

**1984** – A tribal ordinance was passed, creating the charter for Stone Child College, named for Rocky Boy.

This timeline is a modified version of "Rocky Boy's Reservation Timeline," created by Julie Cajune for the Montana Office of Public Instruction publication, *Montana Tribal Histories: Educators Resource Guide and Companion DVD*.



# Montana's Landless Indians and the Assimilation Era of Federal Indian Policy: A Case of Contradictions



## Historical Context

Familiarity with the following terms found throughout both Part 1—Historical Context and Part 2—Analysis Activities will assist with your understanding of the material presented. As you come upon each term, close reading of the text will give you clues to meaning. (Also, for additional information, refer to the US Department of the Interior: Indian Affairs FAQs site—<http://www.bia.gov/FAQs/>.)

Annuities	General Allotment Act of 1887 (Dawes Act, allotment, allotted)	Public domain
Assimilation era	Indigenous	Rations
Assimilation, assimilationist	Inherent sovereignty	Reservation
Autonomy	Medicine Line	Severalty
Boarding schools	Métis	Treaty agreement
		Ward

A few months before Montana became a state, the *Fort Benton River Press* printed an editorial complaining about the “half-breed” Indians who, lacking a reservation of their own, were camped in scattered locations across the state.

Who were the so-called “roaming half-breeds” referred to in this article? Where did they come from, and why didn’t they have a reservation as other tribes in Montana did at this time? Why did they wander, and how did they survive? Why was the press so negative in its treatment of them? Did they remain homeless, or were they able to secure land of their own? To begin to answer these questions, and more, it is important to have an understanding of the historical context of this situation.

### Federal Indian Policy: An Era of Assimilation (1880s–1920s)

The federal government negotiated several key treaties with Montana tribes between 1850 and 1887. These government-to-government agreements recognized Indian nations as sovereign (independent and self-governing) nations and set territorial boundaries. In these treaties, the United States traded permission to build roads, railroads, and settlements on Indian land in return for the promise of food,

supplies, or funds (annuities). In later periods, the press often portrayed rations or other support that the Bureau of Indian Affairs provided tribes as handouts. In reality, these annuities were negotiated payments, provided in exchange for access to Indian land.

After the Civil War, the government agency responsible for Indian affairs shifted from the Department of War to the Interior Department. A Commissioner of Indian Affairs was appointed to oversee matters involving federally recognized tribes in the United States. Treaties between tribes and the federal government had already reduced tribal lands to a fraction of tribal territories, and by the 1880s the reservations themselves had been shrunk by millions of acres in Montana alone as the United States sought to gain more and more Indian land. Along the U.S.–Canadian border, for instance, where the Blackfeet Reservation once spread for hundreds of miles, there were now millions of acres of public domain (land now belonging to the U.S. government). Indigenous peoples were almost entirely confined to their designated reservations, while the United States began implementing a new federal Indian policy: assimilation.

Assimilationist policies intended once and for all to destroy indigenous cultures by remaking

Indian people in the image of white Americans. The Dawes Act (or General Allotment Act) of 1887 enabled the federal government to fragment communal reservation lands into individually owned allotments and to open up the not allotted portions for settlement by white immigrants, in disregard of most of the treaties made between tribes and the federal government. Industrial training facilities and boarding schools, operated by the government or by church missions, separated indigenous youth from their elders. The objectives of such institutions were to teach indigenous children to speak English, to look and behave like white American youth, and to prepare them for domestic or industrial labor in the American economy. Most of all, the boarding schools prevented older generations of tribal peoples from passing down their culture, knowledge, and values to their children and grandchildren. At the same time, indigenous spiritual ceremonies and socio-cultural customs were outlawed or replaced with American holidays, European cultural traditions, and Christian institutions.

Although a small percentage of indigenous people, mainly from eastern tribes, had become American citizens by this time, the vast majority of Indians, especially those in the West, were considered by the United States to be wards of the federal government. The United States claimed it was for the betterment of Indians that they be wards who would depend on the paternalistic guidance of the government in the same way a young child is dependent on a parent. In this way, the United States undermined the inherent sovereignty of tribes. This position was expressed in the Annual Report of the Secretary of the Interior in 1892 and continued throughout the Assimilation Era:

The reservation system and the continuance of tribal relations have been broken to such a degree that what remains of these obstacles to the Indian's progress is light and easily removed. The reservations have been purchased and converted into settlements after due allotments to the Indians in sufficient

quantities to enable each of them to have a farm, and this, with a constant suppression of the influence attempted to be exercised by chiefs or head men, has developed among these people a sense of the importance of the individual, an appreciation of his power to take care of himself and of the necessity that it should be exercised.

—Annual Report of Secretary of the Interior, June 30, 1892, page viii.

### **The New State of Montana**

Prior to 1889, the abundant bison, elk, antelope, and deer populations—noted by Lewis and Clark—had been almost completely obliterated as frontiersmen, prospectors, fortune seekers, and the railroads pushed into the West. The new state of Montana, a child of the gold rush, offered its recently acquired lands up for homesteading to the urban population from the East and Midwest as well as newly arriving European immigrants who longed to fulfill their destinies as prosperous, land-owning citizens. For them Montana glowed with possibilities for achieving economic stature and prosperity: mining, railroad, and timber industries demanded workers, while successful ranchers and farmers could easily secure land and prosper.

American beliefs about race at this time were still firmly hierarchical, and many Americans did not believe Indians or Métis people deserved the same property or rights as European Americans. A free Indian population—that is, Indian or Métis (mixed heritage) peoples who were not confined to reservations but instead inhabited portions of the newly acquired public domain—embodied, in the minds of whites, an economic and social threat so far as these Indians and Métis people might want what the settlers and industrialists themselves wanted: land, resources, and a home to call their own. The idea of the public domain—land now belonging to the federal government but potentially available for white settlement and industrial development—was central to the colonization of the state.

Once this land and its resources had been taken from the Indian tribes, through legal or illegal means, settlers and the government abhorred the idea that any of it might return to tribal ownership.

The U.S. government and many American people often referred to the presence of indigenous inhabitants as the “Indian problem,” because they presented an obstacle to complete colonization of the lands inside the U.S. border by European Americans. Tribes on the reservations were considered in progress, while wandering Indians who had no reservation of their own were viewed with suspicion and negativity by most Montanans. In general, many white Americans and the government believed that American Indians would eventually cease to exist: either through a gradual demise of the population or, as was the theory in the Progressive Era, through assimilation.

### **The Landless Indians: Cree, Chippewa, and Métis**

It is in this historical context that the landless Indians in Montana became the state's own

Indian problem, confounding the federal government and revealing many contradictions between the assimilationist policies of the Progressive Era and the manner in which the state and the federal government handled this complex situation. Complicating the issue of their landlessness was the fact that some of these Indians had been born in Canada, and the U.S. government was very reluctant to acknowledge its own responsibility toward them when they were in the United States.

The landless Indians and Métis in Montana had Canadian and/or American origins and came from several different tribes, primarily Cree and Chippewa, but also Assiniboiné, Dakota, Gros Ventre (White Clay), and others. They had relatives in west-central Canada, Minnesota, North Dakota, and Montana, some of whom were enrolled on reservations at Turtle Mountain and Spirit Lake. Generations of Cree and Chippewa Indians had served as interpreters and guides for explorers, missionaries, and fur traders, and they had often intermarried with French and Scottish newcomers (also, but to a lesser extent, with English and Irish frontiersmen) as well as with



Train of Métis carts, Lewistown, Montana. The building on the left is the residence and office of Dr. W. F. Hanson. On the porch are George T. Bach and his sister, Emily. The exact date is not known, but it appears to be about 1875. Photograph by W. H. Culver, Maiden, Montana. [MHS Photo Archives Collection 950-583.]



Montana's Landless Indians and the Assimilation Era of Federal Indian Policy: A Case of Contradictions  
**Part 1—Historical Context** *(continued)*

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other tribes (Dakota, Assiniboiné, and Gros Ventre, for example). By the mid-1800s, the Métis (“mixed”) people occupied an extensive territory on both sides of the U.S.–Canadian border. Established trade routes throughout Montana were well known and used by all three of these groups, and intermarriage between tribes was common.

Some of the first documented Métis families to arrive here settled in what is now central Montana as early as the 1870s and began establishing communities. Lewistown is one of the many towns settled by Métis people. Many were descendants of the fur trade, but others were people displaced by the westward-expanding populations in Canada and the United States. Many Métis families arrived in the late 1880s, coming from Minnesota, North Dakota, and western Canada.

Some of these Métis and Cree had participated in the Northwest (or Riel) Rebellion of 1885 in Canada. Louis Riel was an educated, articulate Métis man who championed the idea of a Métis homeland in Canada. At the time, mixed-heritage people in Canada did not have the same rights as other people and could not own land. In 1885, Riel was asked by a fellow Métis (Gabriel Dumont) to help lead a rebellion of the Métis and some Cree bands against the British Canadian government, with whom they had a long-standing conflict. The rebellion failed, and the government hanged Riel. Fearing the fate of their leader, many Métis and Cree people who had participated in the rebellion soon crossed the Medicine Line and settled in Montana. They established their own communities of log cabins, farms, churches, and schools mainly along the Rocky Mountain Front—an area they were already familiar with because of its ancient trade routes.

The Métis had a syncretic culture—a distinct culture made from the blending of French, Scottish, Chippewa, Cree, and other cultures and yet maintaining its own unique characteristics. Many of the Métis were Catholic and were literate in both French and Cree (which has its own written language). They frequently worked

as trappers, laborers, and farmers, and were (and still are) known for their musical talents. Louis Riel, for instance, was not just a leader in the Métis rebellion attempt; he was also a poet, a political activist for Métis rights, and an outspoken critic of the whiskey trade, and had been a teacher at St. Peter’s Mission school on the Teton River until the failed rebellion. By the time he was hanged in Canada he had become an American citizen—in Helena, Montana. (Many prominent Helena citizens had protested the Canadian government’s swift execution of Riel, but their protestations were ignored by the British Canadian government.)

In addition to the Métis, Cree Indians made up a significant portion of the landless population. One Cree band was led by Little Bear, one of the participants in the Frog Lake uprising in



Little Bear, a Cree chief, was born in Canada and participated in the 1885 Riel Rebellion. He was related to Chief Rocky Boy by marriage and served as an early political leader of the Cree. He died in 1921.

Little Bear. By T. E. Ronne. Text on back of painting: “Little Bear, Cree Indian Chief Painted from Life At Billings Mont 1907.” [MHS artifact x1954.14.01.]

Montana's Landless Indians and the Assimilation Era of Federal Indian Policy: A Case of Contradictions  
**Part 1—Historical Context** (*continued*)

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Rocky Boy, whose name was more accurately translated as Stone Child, was a Chippewa chief who led the effort to gain a reservation for landless Indians in Montana. Rocky Boy died in 1916, months before an Executive Order granted him and his people the land they had been fighting for.

Rocky Boy. By Joe Scheuerle, 1912, Blackfeet Reservation, Montana. [MHS artifact L2008.03.07. Lent by the family of Joseph Scheuerle and used here with permission.]

Canada and the Riel Rebellion. Not all of the Cree in Montana were rebellion participants. Many were displaced Crees who had been pushed farther and farther west over time.

The other significantly large group of landless Indians was the Chippewa, most of whom, like their leader, Rocky Boy, came to Montana from North Dakota. Many of the Chippewa were enrolled tribal members at the Turtle Mountain Reservation who had not been granted allotments on that reservation and, without land or resources, had left to seek a living elsewhere.

One thing is for certain: by 1889, neither the Métis, nor the Cree, nor the Chippewa were strangers to Montana. All of them had been present here since before the time of statehood. However, because Montana was not the traditional homeland of their ancestors and because these groups did not have treaties with the U.S. government—treaties that could acknowledge their claim to specific lands here—they had no reservation(s) in this state. Making matters more difficult for them was the fact that in the minds of many white Montanans, all landless Indians were of one make: “renegade Crees” escaped from Canada after the failed Riel Rebellion and not deserving of U.S. support.

### **The Role of the Press**

Industries such as mining, railroads, timber, and ranching relied on unhampered access to and control of natural resources. They also depended on a steady influx of settlers to provide the necessary supply of laborers for their prosperity and growth. At this time, a relatively small number of white men owned or controlled the majority of the industries in the state, and often were financially involved in multiple industrial endeavors at the same time. For instance, the largest mines in the state were those in Butte owned by the “Copper Kings”: William Andrews Clark and Marcus Daly. At the turn of the century, non-English-speaking immigrants made up over one-fourth of Butte’s population, and Butte’s mines employed thousands of laborers from dozens of national origins. Clark and Daly made many millions of dollars from their mines and also profited from the timber companies and railroads they owned.

Both Clark and Daly also owned newspapers, but Daly, the owner of the Anaconda Company, owned the largest and most influential paper in the state: the *Anaconda Standard*. The *Anaconda Standard* rivaled the largest newspapers in the country from cities like New York and Chicago. Daly made sure his paper had state-of-the-art equipment, a limitless budget, and a well-trained staff. The *Anaconda Standard* also had special correspondents



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*Anaconda Standard*, December 31, 1899, page 6.

The *Anaconda Standard* boasted a large readership and a wide distribution area. By 1908, the cities in which it was available daily at the newsstands, in addition to those listed in the 1899 masthead, were New York, Detroit, St. Paul, Minneapolis, Kansas City, Los Angeles, San Diego, Ogden, Spokane, Tacoma, Portland, and Seattle.

throughout Montana, and its own Washington bureau to report on national affairs and offer advice to national politicians. Most newspapers in the West were limited to their local communities, but thanks to the railways, the *Anaconda Standard* was available in several major metropolitan centers, where urban Americans could read the latest news of the frontier West as well as national and international affairs.

As the state's preeminent newspaper and as the voice of the Anaconda Company, the *Anaconda Standard* exerted the full force of its authority and influence on the financial and political matters in the state. Daly was known to instruct his editors to pull out all the stops when confronting a rival businessman or promoting the interests of his industries. Many of the smaller papers in the state took their cue from the powerful *Anaconda Standard*, ensuring that the public, local and state governments, and federal officials paid attention to its views.

In its approach to Indian-related issues, the *Anaconda Standard* was very much in line with the federal attitude toward Indians at the time: tribal peoples needed to be "bettered" through the processes of "civilizing" them and divesting them of their tribal ways. Until they could be assimilated, the government felt, Indians should be kept on the reservations where they could be controlled and gradually acculturated. However, one of the locations where different groups of landless Cree and Chippewa Indians frequently made their home, at least during part of the year, was Butte, where they camped out on the flats south of town near the city dump and slaughterhouse. The presence of Indians living in the vicinity or even in Butte proper was not an anomaly, but the arrival in the late 1880s of a rather large group of impoverished Indians not previously residing there vexed the cosmopolitan city.

The situation of landless Indians inhabiting the city dump and selling their wares on the city's streets distressed the *Anaconda Standard* to such an extent that the paper became almost



Montana's Landless Indians and the Assimilation Era of Federal Indian Policy: A Case of Contradictions  
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Colonel Wilbur Fisk Sanders on Main Street, Butte, Montana. Individual Indians, such as these, were not uncommon in towns in Montana. This photograph was likely taken in the 1870s. [MHS Research Center Photo Archives, PAc 2008-33 1. Photographer and exact date unknown.]

completely intolerant of these homeless individuals and frequently attacked them. These racist articles played upon (or fueled) the fears of the white population, many of whom were already deeply prejudiced against Indians. Between 1889 and 1916 (the year that the Rocky Boy Reservation was finally established), the *Anaconda Standard* was a vociferous critic of the “Cree Indian Nuisance,” often magnifying or exaggerating the negative qualities or actions of landless Indians, attributing all manner of ills to them, and putting forth such degrading depictions that public opinion, if derived primarily from the *Standard’s* frequent and scathing editorials, would automatically have been prejudiced and misinformed.

The outcome, of course, was that white Montanans generally perceived landless Indians as an ever-hovering threat—economically, socially, morally, and physically—and pushed for deportation of all landless Indians, regardless of national origin, to Canada. Twice in the first

decade of Montana’s statehood they succeeded, only to have the deported Indians return and rebuild their communities. When the landless Indians had chances of acquiring a reservation or allotments of their own, the press spoke loudly against the loss of the public domain to Indians. Papers such as the *Anaconda Standard* increased their dehumanizing attacks against the Indians and flexed their powers of persuasion on federal authorities.

The heavy influence of the press revealed and cemented white prejudice against the landless Indians. This prejudice determined to a large extent the actions of the federal government with regards to their situation. For the landless Métis and Indian bands, such opposition meant that their people, increasingly impoverished and destitute, would wander the state for over three decades in an effort to survive while striving against enormous odds to acquire a permanent home for themselves and future generations.

“Without Country or Tribe” (newspaper artical), *Fort Benton River Press*, June 26, 1889 (page4).

## WITHOUT COUNTRY OR TRIBE

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We have in Northern and Western Montana a nomadic people who recognize no government as theirs and acknowledge no tribal relations. They know no home save the wide rolling prairie, and it matters little to them, apparently, so they have a little to eat and much to drink. We refer to the roaming half-breeds, wherever they hail from, whether from the British or American side of the line. These people are the descendants of the earlier Hudson Bay Company's employees, who intermarried after the Indian mode, with Indian women. Some of their progeny grew up, and married in the same way, Indian or half-breed wives, until now there are fathers, grand-fathers and great-grand-fathers of mixed blood. These employees represented principally four nationalities: English, French, Scotch and Irish. From this statement it will be seen that no particular national mark is distinguishable, while the Indian has not been extinguished in these strangely mixed people. For some reason the language common to all, however, is a French jargon, while the language of almost every northern or northwestern Indian tribe is spoken by different families English is little understood, as a rule, and sparingly used by them.

Let it be remembered that we are speaking of the roving half-breeds; those in whom the Indian nature seems to pre-dominate; those who will not settle down on land allowed them by either government, and who wander blither and yon at their own sweet will, living from hand to mouth, and spending much of their time in frivolous pursuits and dissipation. As long as northern Montana was a vast Indian reservation, and game was plenty, it mattered little how far or how much they wandered or how improvident they were. But the time has come when this government, or both the Canadian and United States' governments should each take their share of these people and provide some means to keep them within bounds and see that they cease their present mode of life. Wandering around in bands as they do, they are a constant terror to isolated settlers and a menace to good order generally. The better class of these people are settled on land of their own, given them by the two governments. It is plain to be seen, therefore, that those who have not and will not accept lands and homes are not fit people to be allowed to wander at will in either country. They should be taken care of for their own as well as other's sake.



“The Uplift of the Indian: A Practical Experiment” (newspaper article),  
*Anaconda Standard*, April 4, 1909 (page 1).



Washington Bureau of  
the Standard

**W**ASHINGTON, D.C., April 1—A sociological experiment of far-reaching proportions and significance, probably the first of its kind in history, is being conducted by the United States government in the application of the Leupp idea to the long vexatious Indian problem. It involves the making of full-fledged citizens, within a generation or less, out of the raw material of savages and the semi-civilized. The traditional policy of the government towards the Indian has been practically reversed and the Indian is placed in the midst of that same struggle

for food and the other necessities of life that makes good white citizens. It is an experiment upon a vast scale and it is working like a charm because it is based upon sound common sense. It is a hard-headed, hard-hitting application of the philosophy of the hungry stomach which has been the most potent civilizing factor in the history of the world.

Four years ago, Francis E. Leupp was appointed commissioner of Indian affairs by President Roosevelt. It marked the beginning of an almost revolutionary treatment of the Indian problem. For about a century, the United States government, when not fighting with the Indians, had been treating them as helpless,

irresponsible wards, a policy that has cost millions of dollars, was fruitful of unsavory scandals, and resulted only in pauperizing and demoralizing a vanishing race of noble character and splendid possibilities. Cooped up on a reservation, given free rations and little incentive to labor, treated as a race alien in interests and ideals to those of the white man, robbed by the unscrupulous, deluded by unwise and impractical philanthropists, viewed as scarcely human, it is little wonder that at the beginning of this century the Indian was fast becoming a race of parasites and paupers, absorbing little more than the vices from the white man's civilization. His splendid traits of character were rapidly disappearing in an environment that fitted him only for the poorhouse. The deplorable effects of this mistaken policy were recognized in a perfunctory, ineffective way from time to time, but little or nothing was done to bring about the sweeping and vitally needed reforms demanded by the situation until Mr. Leupp brought to the office of commissioner of Indian affairs the ripe results of long and patient study of the problem in the field, face to face with the Indian on the reservation, in the tepee and at the council fire. The gratifying results wrought by the "Leupp idea" in the brief four years Mr. Leupp has administered the affairs of the office give good basis for the prediction that before the present generation passes away the Indian problem will be of historical and academic interest only. The solution has been found and put to work. Mr. Leupp has resigned his position, to take effect this spring, but during his administration of the office he has cleared the ground and pointed the way, blazing a trail which his successors must necessarily follow.

To fit the Indian for complete American citizenship, to make of the pampered pauper a self-supporting, self-respecting member of the community, to wipe out the racial fetish and to give the Indian all the white man's privileges, rights and responsibilities are the foundation principles of the "Leupp idea" of solving the Indian problem. This means the abolition of free rations;

it means the wiping out of the reservations and the allotment of Indian lands in severalty to the Indians; it means the abolition of tribal relations and the practical education of the Indian in the work of making a living for himself and his family; it means the absorption of the Indian into the life of the community as he becomes a whiter man in all but color, and finally, it means the disappearance of the Indian problem itself. The hungry stomach as the most powerful civilizing factor might, perhaps, be taken as the corner stone of Mr. Leupp's policy. It has proved marvelously successful in bringing the Indian within the scope of the economic regime.

Since the establishment of the large Indian reservations in the far West, half a century and more ago, slice after slice has been taken from them as the tide of white settlement swept into the frontier states and territories. Many of the reservations by 1905 had been reduced to a mere fraction of their original extent, robbing the Indians of their hunting grounds. But the reductions that had been made were in response to the insistent demands of the land-hungry white settlers. But it is an entirely different viewpoint that Mr. Leupp takes in urging the abolition of the reservations. He advocates this measure in order that the Indians' tribal relations may be broken up so that the grip of circumstance may make them self-supporting. Since he has been commissioner of Indian affairs a dozen reservations, in whole or in part, have been opened to settlement; about 21,000 Indians have been allotted land in severalty, and steps have been taken to open to settlement practically all of the remaining Indian reservations. A few years more and nearly all of them will be wiped off the map.

With the disappearance of the reservations will go the great handicap of tribal relations, with the powerful and generally malign influence of the medicine man, clearing the ground for civilization. Already the younger generation, more receptive of white man's ideas than the older Indian, is beginning to laugh at the superstitions and pretensions of the medicine man, and when

an institution is made the target for ridicule it is in-decay and its power is slipping away. The medicine man is no longer coddled and cajoled, as has generally been the case in the past. He is made to understand that he must obey the law, which is the same for the Indian and for the white man. The same tactful policy of even justice for both the Indian and the white man, under the same law, has been sufficient to abolish the evil features of the Indian dances. It is an appeal to the Indian's pride and sense of fairness that is more effective than calling out the troops.

The abolition of the system of free rations was begun under Commissioner Jones and has been extended by Commissioner Leupp until today no Indians, except the crippled and dependent or those in places where no work can be got, feed upon the government's charity. The cardinal economic law that if a man eat he must first work is now the law for every able-bodied Indian. Under the regime of free rations the Indian lived a pauperized, parasitical life. Under the regime of work, that teaches that labor and a full stomach are economic cause and effect the Indian is winning back the typically proud self-respect and resourcefulness of character that was rapidly disappearing through the coddling of free rations.

It is a fundamental feature of the Leupp policy that if the Indian problem is to be solved by making the Indians citizens they must be trained to responsibility in practically the same rough, stern methods by which the white man is trained. As far as it is possible and practicable, the Indian is being placed upon his own responsibility and resources. Protected from fraud and imposition, the Indian is being forced to learn the white man's way in the school of experience. It is because of the valuable training it gives them that Commissioner Leupp is permitting and encouraging a large number of the more advanced Indians to negotiate the leases of their own lands and, within certain necessary limitations, to manage their own business affairs. As fast as possible, the swaddling clothes of wardship are being stripped away and the Indian

is taught to walk alone. It is the curriculum of Mr. Leupp's primary class in applied economics. Already the leaven is beginning to work, particularly among the generation, and for more than three years past Indians have been profitably employed upon railroad construction, irrigation projects, road building and at agricultural labor.

Another vitally important education reform of Mr. Leupp's has been the campaign against non-reservation schools. He has wisely contended that the education of the Indian for ultimate citizenship should be mainly of a practical nature, designed to make the Indian self-supporting by training his native abilities. That is the one great need now, and to accomplish the greatest good the Indian school must be upon the reservation in the midst of the people it seeks to uplift. Here it becomes not only an educational center, but also a civic and social center which ministers not along to the young, but also it directly teaches and uplifts the ideals of the entire tribe. Again, this is the application of sound common sense to a definite end and congress is beginning to see the wisdom of the plan. As a general rule, when the pupil leaves the big non-reservation schools, which are maintained at great expense, and returns to his tribe, he soon drifts back into the old ways. And the worst feature of this backsliding is that this educated Indian carries back to his tribe and people not one singly effective message of civilization. That is the pity of it, and it is the wasteful evil of the system.

"The key to the whole Indian problem," says Mr. Leupp, "is to remember that the Indian is a man like the rest of us, and that the danger lies in treating him as a thing apart and in inventing artificial methods in dealing with him."

This is the basis of the new Indian policy that is devoted to saving the sturdy character of the Indian and to tactfully and naturally leading him along the path of normal evolution toward the ideals of American citizenship in which the Indian as a problem will become a historic memory. That is the Leupp idea.

*(Note: article continues but is cropped here.)*



Gov. Norris's submission to *Stories of the States*, March 11, 1910 (pages 1 and 2, and final paragraph). MHS MC 35:16/7 Montana Governors Papers.

Forty years from tepee to temple might be said to expressively compass the history of Montana, so recent has been the beginning of the development of this young member of the great sisterhood of States. Less than half a century ago the red man roamed at will through this country, and whether engaged in his primitive sports, in the chase of the buffalo, in "making medicine" about the council fire, or in passing the winter days in calm content in the comfort of his wigwam, he was able to say that he was monarch of all he surveyed.

According to historical information, it is now just a century since the first building to be erected by a white man within the borders of what is now Montana was constructed--this being located on the Yellowstone river, the builder being Emanuel Lisa, and the structure coming to be known as Lisa's Fort.

But this land of the Indian and the buffalo possessed in those days little attraction for the world beyond the Ohio, and very few beside the hardiest of the trappers, scouts and plainmen ever forced their way into the wilderness.

Early in the sixties, however, some of the more adventurous spirits of the East, pursuing their quest for gold, came into the country and almost instantly found their dreams come true. Gold was discovered--gold in great quantities--and the magic word was not long in finding its way back to the land whence they had come. Followed the rush of fortune-seekers, and with them came some of undesirable character, men whose absence from the homes of their youth was enforced, and the need of some form of organized government speedily became apparent. At Bannack, in the southern part of the State, this government was first established, and the Territory of Montana was organized in 1864, Bannack being the first capital.



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The hardy spirit of the prospector and the trail-blazer drove them into other quarters of the country in search of that which might make wealthy men of all of them. In many of the gulches throughout the State wealth was found in the sand along the streams, and uncounted millions were taken out in the crudest way in the following years.

As the white man came into the land of treasure the red man found his roving space restricted, and in some instances he undertook reprisals. History repeated itself and civilization asserted its right to endure; and so the soldiers came and the Indian was brought into submission.

In time other metals were discovered in the mountains in various sections of the State, and the newer mines, operated with the more modern equipment, added their millions to the output, so that the new land was soon known at home and abroad as the "Treasure State".

The term was well applied, but it must today be given a broader application than when it was first bestowed. It must be taken to mean not only that Montana is a land of mineral treasure, but that in agriculture and horticulture, in forests and water power she has treasures potentially more valuable than all of the wealth that has been taken from the earth.

Montana's history as a State dates from November 8, 1889, on which day she was admitted to Statehood, and from that momentous day there has never been a doubt that she would in good time take her place among the great States of the Union. From the first the inrush of fortune-seekers brought men who came with the belief that somewhere in the new land there must be spots that would offer rewards to the tiller of the soil. In many sections of the country they found broad valleys wherein the agriculturist might have wealth for the taking. The State being semi-arid in nature,



-5-

lands which may now be secured at a reasonable figure are sure to increase largely in value. Our irrigated land, producing five to seven tons of alfalfa per acre, similar to land which costs \$200 per acre in States to the West, can be obtained at \$40 to \$60 per acre.

Montana now has five transcontinental railroad lines, with two others in prospect, and branch lines have been built to tap the rich sections. Interurban electric systems are also in process of building or projected in several sections of the State.

The people of Montana are proud of their school system and of the work being done in all of her educational institutions. The State institutions are maintained by liberal appropriations by the Legislative Assembly, there are county high schools in many of the counties, and in every section of the State there is a school for the children of the community. The State apportionment for the public schools in 1910 is \$3.75 per capita.

Montana's population is made up of people from every State and from almost every country. These have fused into one of the most loyal, patriotic, broad-minded and generous peoples to be found in this country today. They are intensely proud of their State and of the record it is making in forcing its way to the first rank of States--a State that, although not yet having attained its majority in Statehood, is growing with wonderful rapidity. They have a cordial welcome for the homeseeker and are always glad to extend<sup>to</sup> him any aid or counsel that may be needed to acquaint him with the conditions here and cause him to become a contented citizen and a contributor to the development of the State.

# Montana's Landless Indians and the Assimilation Era of Federal Indian Policy: A Case of Contradictions



## Part 1—Historical Context Worksheet

### DOCUMENTS AND IMAGES:

- “Without Country or Tribe” (newspaper article), *Fort Benton River Press*, June 26, 1889 (page 4).
- “The Uplift of the Indian: A Practical Experiment” (newspaper article), *Anaconda Standard*, April 4, 1909 (page 1).
- Excerpt from Gov. Norris’s submission to the book *Stories of the States* (essay) sent to Joe Mitchell, editor of *The National Magazine*. Prepared by the governor’s secretary for Gov. Norris. March 11, 1910. MHS MC 35:16/7 Montana Governors Papers.

### QUESTIONS:

**Questions, unless otherwise noted, do not need to be answered in complete sentences.**

1. What are the three main groups who made up the landless Indians, and where did each group come from?

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2. Why did the press tend to refer to all three groups as Cree?

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3. “Without Country or Tribe” alleges that the landless people “recognize no government as theirs and acknowledge no tribal relations.” What evidence does it present to support this?

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4. How does the article from the *Fort Benton River Press* characterize the Métis (people of mixed heritage), and how are some of these depictions based on a belief in the racial inferiority of the “Indians”?

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Montana's Landless Indians and the Assimilation Era of Federal Indian Policy: A Case of Contradictions  
**Part 1—Historical Context Worksheet** *(continued)*

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5. What do the last two sentences in “Without Country or Tribe” imply, in your interpretation?

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6. “The Uplift of the Indian” re-states a common mistake—that reservation tribes received “free rations.” Why, in fact, were tribes supposed to receive rations from the federal government?

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7. What are nine basic principles and objectives of the “Leupp idea,” as listed in the third column of this article? (Frances Leupp was the Commissioner of Indian Affairs.)

- 1) 

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- 2) 

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- 3) 

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- 4) 

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- 5) 

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- 6) 

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- 7) 

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- 8) 

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- 9) 

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8. If the federal government’s assimilation policies, as defined in the Leupp idea, were successful, what would the outcome be for the indigenous tribes and their people?

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9. What does “the abolition of tribal relations” mean?

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Montana's Landless Indians and the Assimilation Era of Federal Indian Policy: A Case of Contradictions  
**Part 1—Historical Context Worksheet** *(continued)*

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10. What is “allotment in severalty”?

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11. How does the author of “The Uplift of the Indian” and the Office of Indian Affairs view indigenous cultures, including their spiritual traditions and practice? How are tribal ceremonies depicted?

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12. “The Uplift of the Indian” reiterates the federal government’s claim that “the law ... is the same for the Indian and the white man.” In what ways was this statement incorrect (in that era)?

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13. List some of the terms and phrases from “The Uplift of the Indian” that demonstrate the attitude that Indians were children and treated as such.

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14. In the government’s plans of assimilation, as outlined in this article, who is/are not mentioned as being one of the entities to determine the fate of the Indians?

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15. How does Governor Norris, through his essay, envision the state of Montana in 1910, and what mention does he make of tribal peoples in this vision?

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**16. Thought Question:** One of the fundamental reasons behind the assimilation policies of this period (1880s through 1920s) was the assertion that Indian peoples needed, for their own good, to be made responsible instead of being treated as pampered paupers. What caused the general state of poverty among Indian tribes, and what was the federal government’s role in creating those conditions? Answer in complete sentences.

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# Montana's Landless Indians and the Assimilation Era of Federal Indian Policy: A Case of Contradictions



## Part 2—Analysis Activity

### A—1: Montana's Landless Peoples: Cree, Chippewa, And Métis

#### A-1 Worksheet

#### DOCUMENTS AND IMAGES:

- Cree Pouches: Tourist Pouch, 1900, MHS artifact x1957.05.34. and Cree Pouch, MHS artifact x1982.23.01.
- “Queer Spots In and About Butte: The Cree Village” (newspaper article), *Anaconda Standard*, May 27, 1906 (page 6).
- Plains Cree Indian Family by Fred Peeso (photograph), 1906, near Butte, MT, MHS PAc 955-698 Peeso Collection.
- Indians Near Butte by John Babbist (photograph), 1900, courtesy Historic Photo Archives, Portland, Oregon. Photograph #9104-53 (00279).
- Two Indian Men and Saddle, Indian Mother and Baby, and Indian Woman and Tent

(three photographs), circa 1905, presumed to be near Birdseye, MT, MHS PAc 85-29, Underseeth Collection.

- Cree Moss Bag (replica), MHS artifact 2004.80.01.

#### HISTORICAL NOTES:

The *Anaconda Standard* was Montana's premier newspaper and the mouthpiece of the Anaconda Company. The paper published many articles on landless Indians, almost all of which were harshly critical and full of stereotypes. The racist articles promoted stereotypes and fueled white fears while reflecting widely held anti-Indian prejudices among the paper's white readers.

#### QUESTIONS:

**Questions, unless otherwise noted, do not need to be answered in complete sentences.**

1. Where did the Cree Indians in the Butte area live?

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2. Describe their homes according to the article.

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3. According to the article, what did these Indians eat, and where did they get their food? How was their food stored?

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Montana's Landless Indians and the Assimilation Era of Federal Indian Policy: A Case of Contradictions  
**Part 2—Analysis Activity; A-1 Worksheet** *(continued)*

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4. What did these Cree Indians wear (men, women, children), according to this article?

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5. What religion or spiritual traditions did the Crees in Butte follow?

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6. How did Indians living near Butte make a living (as described in the newspaper article)?

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7. How does the author of the “Queer Spots In and About Butte: The Cree Village” describe these Indians? (See final paragraph.)

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8. What is the man (center) in the photograph Indians Near Butte carrying? What does this suggest about the work these men are doing?

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9. Describe the men in the photograph Two Indian Men and Saddle from Birdseye. How do they look? What are they wearing? What kind of work might they do?

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10. Describe the woman, the mother and baby, and their home in the photographs Indian Mother and Baby and Indian Woman and Tent.
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
11. **Thought Question:** How do images of actual Cree people and artifacts differ from or support the descriptions of Cree Indians in the newspaper article “Queer Spots In and About Butte?” Use complete sentences.
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_



Cree tourist pouch from 1900.

Small items such as this pouch were made to sell for cash to tourists and collectors.

[MHS artifact x1957.05.34. Collection of Robert Vaughn, gift of his daughter, Elizabeth Sprague]



Older Cree pouch made for personal use.

[MHS artifact x1982.23.01, gift of Nelle A. Kenyon.]



"Queer Spots In and About Butte: The Cree Village" (newspaper article),  
*Anaconda Standard*, May 27, 1906 (page 6).

## ***Queer Spots In and About Butte; No. 11 The Cree Village***

**A**mong the "queer spots" in the vicinity of Butte the Cree Indian village must occupy a place of decided interest. Most Butte people going for a drive out on the flat give the Cree Indian camp a wide berth, seeing little that is likely to prove of interest in the representatives of the "noble red men" who have fixed their habitation near Butte. But the Crees, dirty, ragged and poor through they may be, are nevertheless an interesting people.

As you drive along the road past the cemeteries toward the east, stretching out toward the city dump lies one of the camps. For the most part it is made up of common wall tents, eight or ten in number, but several conical tepees can also generally be seen. Another camp of the Crees is located a little farther south, up a short distance on the side of Timbered Butte. Here there are no more than four or five tents. One or two families may occupy a tent, and as the Indians are constantly coming and going, it is almost impossible to ascertain their exact numbers; probably 50 would not be far out of the way.

### **NOT CLEAN.**

These homes are not very imposing from the outside, surrounded as most of them are by piles of bones, rubbish and filth, and often the interior is even less inviting. Some of the people have a faint idea of cleanliness, while

others are dirty in the extreme. The ground is generally covered with old pieces of carpet, oil-cloth or blankets, and close to the walls are packed the blankets for sleeping and clothing. From the poles may hang moccasins or meat in the process of drying. In the wall tent there is always a stove or something which answers the purpose of a stove. It may be an old metal wash tub or something of the kind, and it is always furnished with a stovepipe. In the tepee there is no stove but a tripod crane from which a kettle is suspended. There is no stovepipe; the flaps are so arranged that the smoke draws out of the top of the tepee.

### **IN THE TEPEE.**

The half of the tent nearest the door belongs to the women and children, the far side always being reserved for the men. This custom is pretty generally observed by all Indians. When entering the tent, if you are a man, you are greeted with "Os-tum-pe-to-ge" (Come back inside). Should you come at meal time, you would find the whole family sitting on the floor around the fire with tin plates in their hands and a cup of tea beside them. Their spread is not varied; boiled meat is the principal dish at all meals; it may be beef, calf's head or fish. The bread is usually cooked in a frying pan and eaten without butter. They all have good appetites and seem to enjoy their food.

### **HOLIDAYS.**

If your visit happens to be on New Year's day or during some other celebration, the Crees would have out their holiday goods. The tea would be replaced by beer and plenty of it. The rest of the meal would likely consist chiefly of dried blueberries cooked with meat, making a greasy, unsavory mixture of which the Indians are very fond. The berries are kept in a sack made of the entire skin of a very young calf, looking, when filled with the berries, like toy dogs stuffed with sawdust. Some of the children, on these occasions, may be seen sticking their fingers in a jar or jam and licking them off like a bear cub.

### **CIVILIZATION.**

Some of the Crees are good Indians and get drunk only twice in the year—New Year's day and the Fourth of July. Others are not so good and are drunk about all the time. But these are in the minority. They have no trouble whatever in obtaining liquor whenever they want it, notwithstanding the strict laws prohibiting the sale of liquor to Indians.

### **CREE ATTIRE.**

As a rule the Crees dress in "store clothes," and almost everything they have is of white man's manufacture. In the fall they lay in a supply

of buckskin, most of which is made into moccasins which are often worn out before the next hunting season opens, and so you will find many of the Indians wearing shoes. They generally keep a pair or two of beaded moccasins, which they reserve for festal occasions. A few of the older, however, still cling to the leggings, breech cloth and blanket. Most of them have Indian "togs," which they keep carefully wrapped up and wear only as their Sunday best, not, however, to go to church in. The women wear calico dresses, moccasins and blanket; baby boards are not used. The mother leans over, lifts the baby onto her back and then draws the blanket tightly around their backs. Thus the child is held very securely in a fairly comfortable position. Occasionally one may see a "buck" who is condescending enough to tote his offspring around squaw fashion.

### **FASHIONS.**

The men as a rule wear their hair long and braided, the front hair being combed straight back and tied, not parted, as with the Sioux and Crows.

The children in general wear anything they can get. On a cold winter's day, when the ground is covered with snow, little boys and girls are to be seen clothed only in calico shirts and dresses, barefooted, playing around and apparently enjoying themselves as much as the bundled-up white children.

Like all plains Indians, the Cree is fond of horses, and unless he is very

### **PECULIARITIES.**

poor, he will have five or six head. He also generally owns a wagon and numerous dogs. The dogs are used for various purposes. The Indian does not, as the white man is reported to do, turn his extra dogs through the sausage machine, but he turns them into soup. The squaw puts them to another use. She hitches them to the travois and is often seen returning from the dump, the dog patiently trotting along under the weight of the load. The dog travois was the primitive vehicle of the plains tribes, while in the far North the sledges play an important part.

### **PAGAN CUSTOMS.**

Although the Crees are nominally members of the Catholic church, many of them are in reality pagans, especially the old women, who are very conservative and the last to surrender old customs and the superstitious beliefs of their heathen ancestors. Many of the old dances, songs and ceremonies are still retained. It is not uncommon to find in the fireplaces within the tents a little pile of ashes and a few pieces of sweet grass remaining unconsumed which have burned as incense for a sweet savor to the spirits.

### **FEAR THE CAMERA.**

It is not an easy matter to secure photographs of the Crees. Many object to being photographed, thinking that it takes vitality from them and they are liable to die. While pointing the camera at one of the tents old Mrs. Lo came out and protested so vigorously that the camera had to be turned in another direction.

She would not even allow her dog to be taken, because as the old man who interpreted put it:

"She say if the dog taken, he dead. Damn fool, he got to dead some time anyway; can't always life."

One old Indian on being photographed crossed himself devoutly several times.

### **THE MODERN CHASE.**

The Montana Cree, as did his wild ancestors, gets his living by hunting, but in a different manner. Instead of making for the woods or mountains he generally heads for the city dump, slaughter houses or the back doors of hotels and restaurants. As he is a good hunter, patient and wary, he rarely goes home empty handed. If he is especially energetic he may haul firewood into Butte, which he sells for \$5 a load. Some money is made by selling beadwork and curios, but perhaps the chief industry is preparing and selling "buffalo horns." Lo goes to the slaughter house, picks out some good, symmetrical cows' horns, takes them to his tent, fully polishes and mounts them on a board covered with plush. Then he goes to Butte and sells them. Many easterners buy the horns to send to friends who have not been so fortunate as to travel west and see "real buffalo horns."

### **CASINO.**

Another chief occupation of the Cree is playing casino, or, as he calls it, "sweep." He is very fond of the game and will play for hours at a stretch. He also plays checkers with men and boards of his own manufacture, 16 men each



being used instead of 12, and in other details the game differs from the white man's game. Another game, purely Indian, is called "o-shan-noh" (bones). Two Indians face each other, having in each hand a piece of bone about two and one-half inches long by three-quarters of an inch wide, one being plain and the other wrapped around the middle with a rag. One of the men passes the bones back and forth quickly through his hands while the other tries to guess which hand contains the plain bone. Thus taking turns, they keep up their guessing until one player loses all his stake. Each man has his retainers, who occupy the space back of him and generally keep up an incessant chanting while the game is in progress.

The Cree names all have meanings. The call Butte "spiet-e-now" or "spiet-e-now-oo-tah-now," meaning "high hill." The word for Anaconda is "wah-sah-has-kaw," meaning "valley in the mountains." Deer Lodge is called "ki-poh-ho-to-we-kah-nik." Americans are called "zie-chu-mo-ko-mon," meaning "big knives," the name arising from the swords used by the United States cavalry. Their word for Indian is "ne-he-o-wok."

Although considered ignorant, the Crees have an alphabet of their own and a written language in which books are printed and which nearly all the men and older boys can read. They also carry on correspondence among themselves, although they may not be able to read or write English. Only the older Indians know the sign language, the younger generation taking little or no interest in the old ways.

### FREQUENT GUESTS.

The Crees are not the only Indians to visit Butte; they come occasionally from all directions, Shoshones, Flat-heads, Bannacks, Chippewas and others. But the Crees are the only ones who are with us the year round.

The Montana Crees must not be taken as the best type of their race. They are but a small band of renegades, fugitives from the Canadian government, having left their reservations for various reasons. Land troubles with the government and the agents are given among the reasons, and the Crees also say that they cannot make a living in Canada so easily as here. They don't like the agents, who make them work too hard. Perhaps the chief cause of their first wandering was the Riel rebellion. After that rebellion many of the Crees moved over into the United States, where they have been homeless wanderers ever since. They have often been rounded up and sent back to Canada, but only to cross the border to this country once more.

### FROM CANADA.

The main body of the Crees live in Canada, and they are much superior to their relatives in the United States. They make their living chiefly by hunting, trapping and fishing for the Hudson Bay company. The more southern bands do some farming and cattle raising. Altogether the Crees in their various branches number in the neighborhood of 15,000.

Butte's Crees may be reckoned among its most peaceable inhabitants, and in general it may be said of the Crees that they are a peaceable,

law-abiding people. Their progress towards civilization is slow. They are almost entirely self-supporting, receiving little or no aid from the government, but while they engage so extensively in hunting and fishing, little advance can be expected. When these resources for a livelihood have been exhausted they will be forced to settle down, cultivate lands, care for their cattle and learn to walk the white man's road.



Montana's Landless Indians and the Assimilation Era of Federal Indian Policy: A Case of Contradictions  
**Part 2—Analysis Activity A-1**

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Plains Cree Indian Family. By Fred Peeso. Near Butte, Montana, 1906.  
[MHS PAc 955-699, Peeso Collection.]



Indians Near Butte. Photo by John Babbist, 1900.  
[Used with permission from the Historic Photo Archives, Portland, Oregon. Photo 9104-53 (00279).]

Montana's Landless Indians and the Assimilation Era of Federal Indian Policy: A Case of Contradictions  
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Two Indian Men and Saddle. [MHS PAc 85-29, Underseth Collection.]

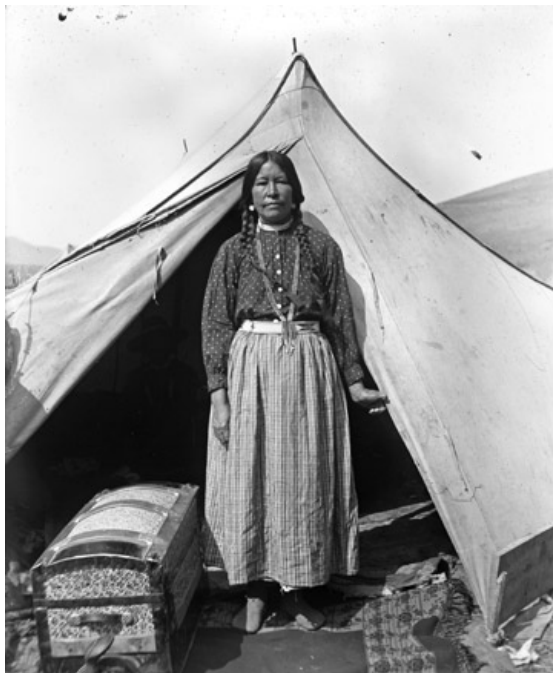


Montana's Landless Indians and the Assimilation Era of Federal Indian Policy: A Case of Contradictions  
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Indian Mother and Baby. [MHS PAC 85-29, Underseth Collection.]



Indian Woman and Tent.  
[MHS PAC 85-29, Underseth Collection.]



Replica of a Cree Indian "moss bag" used for carrying babies. It is called a moss bag because soft dry moss was used as diapering for the babies.  
[MHS artifact 2004.80.01.]



# Montana's Landless Indians and the Assimilation Era of Federal Indian Policy: A Case of Contradictions



## Part 2—Analysis Activity A—2: Montana's Landless Peoples: Cree, Chippewa And Métis

### A-2 Worksheet

#### DOCUMENTS AND IMAGES:

- “Sunrise on the City Dumps” (newspaper article), *Anaconda Standard*, March 29, 1903 (page 25).
- “Death of a Good Indian” (newspaper obituary), *Anaconda Standard*, February 7, 1904 (page 11).
- *Mothers Under the Skin* by Charles M. Russell (sketch), circa 1900, courtesy Charles M. Russell Museum, Great Falls, Montana.

#### HISTORICAL NOTES:

The *Anaconda Standard* regularly published literary columns—stories made up to entertain their readers. “Sunrise on the City Dumps” is one of several stories made up about the “Cree” Indians living near Butte. The *Anaconda Standard*’s stories about the Cree were negative in their treatment of these

Indians, and many of them were blatantly racist in their content and tone. (In fact, not all of the Indians camped near Butte were Cree; Rocky Boy was Chippewa and the members of his band were primarily Chippewa, but a few married-in members were Blackfeet, Assiniboine, or from other tribes.)

Artist Charlie Russell knew and worked with many Native American people, including Chippewa and Cree members of Rocky Boy’s band and Little Bear’s band. Young Boy, a Cree who often resided in Butte, worked for Russell and modeled for some of his paintings, sketches, and sculptures. Russell also worked with people like Frank Linderman to publicize the need for a permanent home for the Chippewas and Crees in Montana.

#### QUESTIONS:

Questions, unless otherwise noted, do not need to be answered in complete sentences.

1. How are the Cree family members in “Sunrise on the City Dumps” described? Be specific to each one.

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2. Why might the author of “Sunrise ...” have chosen to use Shakespearean English for the words spoken by the Cree father in the story?

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Montana's Landless Indians and the Assimilation Era of Federal Indian Policy: A Case of Contradictions  
**Part 2—Analysis Activity; A-2 Worksheet** *(continued)*

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3. Define the following words from “Sunrise...”

covetous: \_\_\_\_\_

slovenly: \_\_\_\_\_

vermin: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Do you think these characterizations of Cree women, men, and children are factual or not?

Explain your answer:

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5. What is the overall message that a reader in the past would have gotten from this story? What is the author's purpose and how does the language used accomplish the task?

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6. Compare the family in “Sunrise on the City Dumps” to the Denny family in the obituary. Specifically, how are the actual people of the Denny family different from the fictitious characters in the “Sunrise ...” piece?

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7. Why do you think the editor chose the title “Death of a Good Indian” for Mrs. Denny's obituary instead of simply “Death of an Indian” or “Death of Mrs. Denny”? What is implied by the title, and how does that implication reflect the views of the newspaper?

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8. Examine the sketch by Charlie Russell. Describe the people and what they are doing.

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9. Why do you think Charlie Russell titled his sketch *Mothers Under the Skin*?

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10. **Thought Question:** Artistic and literary portrayals of people shape and influence public perceptions of those people. How do the Russell sketch, the “Sunrise ...” piece, and the obituary portray Cree Indians to a white audience, and what do these portrayals say about the complex issues of race, stereotypes, and racism in Montana in the twentieth century? Answer in complete sentences.

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"Sunrise on City Dumps" (newspaper article), *Anaconda Standard*, March 29, 1903 (page 25).

## ***Sunrise on the City Dumps.***

"Hi, there! Cast off thy drowsiness and salute the dawn of a fair day. The clouds disperse before the first trump of daylight and the federate elements bid them away, and they flee from the murky horizon on the west and mingle with the sheen of dewdrops that glisten in their silent welcome to the sun.

"Awake, squaw, arouse thy stupid faculties and bid them to action, for I hear in the distance the rumble of ponderous wheels and the squeaking of the old wagon box against the standards of the bolster as it grates and gnaws and crunches under a mighty weight of grub. Arise, wench! Pile high the fagots upon the smoldering coals and prepare for the feast. We shall break our fast this glorious morn."

The stalwart Cree buck nestled cozily beneath the blankets and sighed, and his companion of the tepee, his faithful squaw, pulled herself together with an effort and waddled out to the forked sticks and heaped bark and chips upon the bed of dull coals which the night before had inspired the old black kettle to sing the song at twilight.

Two miniature bucks, just entering the stage of babyhood when all the world looks beautiful, ran out of the tepee shouting, and they vaulted over the bunches of smoke-cured sage brush and attacked hordes of imaginary beings, and they threw rocks at their mother and the laughed in their own peculiar way. The mist of the early morning was tonic for them, and their muscles seemed to gain strength with each succeeding bound. Black, long, unkempt hair streamed this way and that way and the dirt of a week's accumulation gave to their faces the appearance of determination to do, and the little Indians did enjoy it.

But the old squaw was in a humor contrary to every idea and

thought expressed in word and act of her offspring, and she scowled as she raked the coals together with her bony fingers and dipped her hand into the old black kettle to gauge the heat of its miscellaneous contents.

The sun rolled over the rocky peak in the east and smiled warmly upon the little city of smoke-besmirched tents. There was life again in every tepee, for every Indian in that city was preparing to break his fast.

Old Tom, the driver of the scavenger wagon, swore with becoming emphasis at his team of horses and the little Indian boys and girls, half dressed, gay in spirit and unconscious of the long life that lay before them, indifferent to all else save their own inclinations and hunger, ran towards old Tom and stopped a few paces from his wagon and lapsed into a snuff-colored study, their eyes and mouths open. Tom looked at them as he jerked the stays from beneath the load of garbage and smiled as he noted the expressions of gladness on the dirty little faces.

Juicy pieces of meat and a rare assortment of vegetables, cooked, seasoned and good to look at, rolled out upon the ground and it seemed to the little Indians that it was a feast day all right.

Squaws sauntered out towards the wagon and circled round about the festal pile and looked with covetous eyes upon the offering that had just been heaped upon the ground, an offering from Butte's prolific alleys and backyards. Each squaw clutched in her hand a gunny sack, and each had already staked out an imaginary claim on the grub pile that was in their midst; but old Tom was slow making ready to pull his wagon away so that the squaws might attack the heap of precious and delectable morsels.

At last old Tom was headed for after another load and when he returned he looked about for the pile he had left on the other trip, but it was not there. Old Tom smiled as he dumped the second load, for there was not a hungry Cree in sight, no dirty-faced papooses and slovenly squaws to look upon the heap, for old Tom reckoned that all things have a limit, and he cares only to look upon his load of refuse and not to tax his eyes and senses with the additional sight presented by a pack of dirty, hungry Cree vermin.

It was the monthly feast day on the city dump, and every Indian in camp had gorged and gorged till he could gorge no more in the days antedating the crematory.

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"Death of a Good Indian"  
(newspaper article), *Anaconda Standard*, February 7, 1904 (page 11).

## DEATH OF A GOOD INDIAN

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**Mrs. Harry Denny, Mother of Nine Children, a Cree, Goes to the Happy Hunting Grounds—Notes and Gossip About Town.**

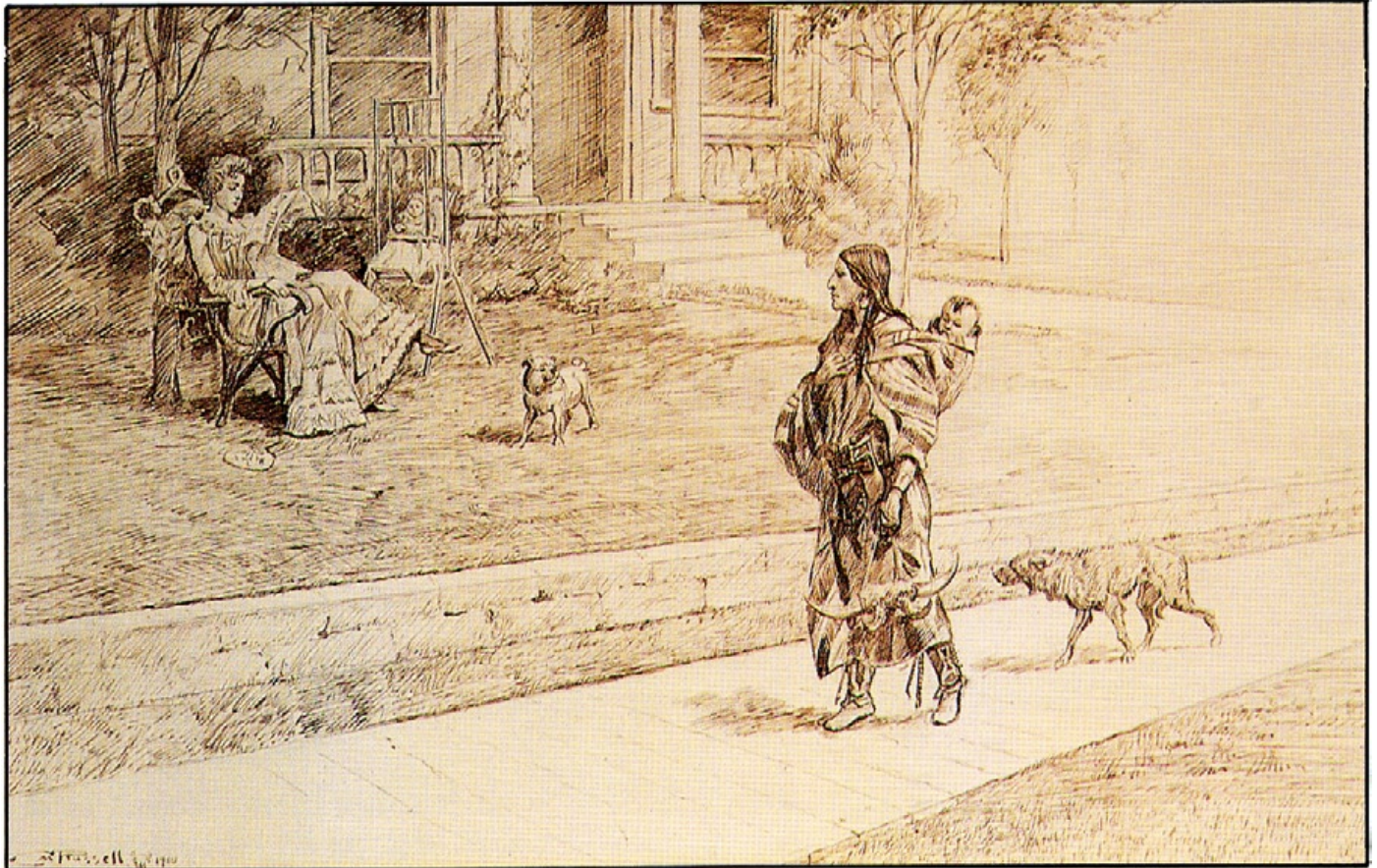
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Harry Denny, a Cree, who with his family, consisting of wife and nine children, has been living near the city dump, was heartbroken yesterday morning, and he is still greatly distressed, for his wife died at 8 o'clock yesterday forenoon. Denny and his wife were exceptions in the Cree tribe, for they had lived together quietly for many years, and always discountenanced the indiscriminate marriages which have been the rule among members of the tribe. They reared a family, and all of the children held their parents in high regard. Denny hauls wood and does odd jobs, and manages to provide for his children. Recently he has called upon the county to assist him. His horses have strayed away and are scattered on the plains of Deer Lodge and Powell counties. His wife has been sick for several weeks, and recently he called upon his old friend, Sol Levy, who secured assistance for his wife through the influence of the county. A log cabin was rented and made comfortable, and in that cabin the squaw died, surrounded by her family. Two of the daughters are married, and they have been seen in the city often, both neatly garbed and one of them carrying a papoose on her back. The funeral will be held Monday afternoon at 2 o'clock, and interment will be in the Catholic cemetery.



Montana's Landless Indians and the Assimilation Era of Federal Indian Policy: A Case of Contradictions  
**Part 2—Analysis Activity A-2**

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*Mothers Under the Skin.* Sketch by Charles M. Russell, circa 1900.  
[Used with permission from the Charles M. Russell Museum, Great Falls, Montana, gift of Jock Warden]

# Montana's Landless Indians and the Assimilation Era of Federal Indian Policy: A Case of Contradictions



## Part 2—Analysis Activity

### A—3: Montana's Landless Peoples: Cree, Chipepwa And Métis

#### A-3 Worksheet

#### DOCUMENTS AND IMAGES:

- Letter from Thralls Wheat, Clerk for the Department of Interior Allotting Service, to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Washington, D.C., April 20, 1909, MHS SC 903 Rocky Boy Reservation Records.
- Plains Cree Indians by Fred Peeso (photograph), 1906, MHS PAc 955-698 Peeso Collection.
- Horse and Travois by Frank Bird Linderman (photograph), undated—probably 1900-1910, at the outskirts of a Montana town, possibly Helena, Linderman Collection, photo 007. VIII.222, Courtesy Archives of the Mansfield Library, University of Montana, Missoula.

#### HISTORICAL NOTES:

By 1909, when Wheat's census was done, many members of Little Bear's Cree band were also affiliated with Rocky Boy's Chippewa band, either having married in or because the two leaders were trying to work together to find a home. The men in the Peeso photograph were Canadian Crees living in Butte at the time of the photograph, and are listed as such on the 1909 census of Rocky Boy's band. Young Boy (second from the left in the Plains Cree Indians photograph) worked for artist Charlie Russell, modeling for sketches and sculptures.

#### QUESTIONS:

**Questions, unless otherwise noted, do not need to be answered in complete sentences.**

1. What was the purpose of Wheat's 1909 census of Indians affiliated with Rocky Boy's band?

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2. Why was national origin important in this census?

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Montana's Landless Indians and the Assimilation Era of Federal Indian Policy: A Case of Contradictions  
**Part 2—Analysis Activity; A-3 Worksheet** *(continued)*

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3. How many of the band did Wheat determine were American Indians? What percentage of the total number of band members is this? How many (and what percent) were Canadians?

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4. How did Wheat describe the living conditions of Rocky Boy's band?

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5. How were members of Rocky Boy's band making a living? What kinds of work did they do?

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6. How did Rocky Boy and his band respond to Wheat's announcement that the Indian Office wanted to relocate them in northeastern Montana (Valley County) and help them build houses and learn to farm?

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7. Why did Wheat think it would be difficult for these Indians to move to the proposed reservation (list three reasons), and what solution did he suggest?

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8. Describe what is happening in the photo Horse and Travois. What do the conditions seem to have been for traveling at this particular time?

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Montana's Landless Indians and the Assimilation Era of Federal Indian Policy: A Case of Contradictions  
Part 2—Analysis Activity A-3

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Department of the Interior  
United States Indian Service  
Blackfeet Indian Reservation  
Browning Montana  
April 20, 1909

Hon. Commissioner of Indian Affairs,  
Washington, D.C.

Sir:

In your letter of March 27 , 1909, land 20516-1909, J. T. R., you directed me to proceed to Helena, Montana, for the purpose of investigating the condition of Rocky Boy's band of Chippewa Indians, and compiling an accurate census of the Indians belonging to his band.

It was suggested in this letter that I might find affiliated with Rocky Boy's band a number of Indians who are properly wards of the Canadian government and as such are not entitled to any benefits under the laws of the United States pertaining to the Indians within its boundaries. Should this be found true, I was directed to prepare a separate census of such Indians.

In compliance with these instructions, I have the honor to report that I proceeded to Helena, Montana, on April 6, 1909, and at once began my duties of investigating, getting the family history, and preparing a census of the Indians of Rocky Boy's band. I found Chief Rocky Boy and a portion of his band camped near the slaughter houses about one mile east of Helena. From Rocky Boy I learned that his band of Indians was scattered over the western part of Montana, and in order for me to get an accurate census, and to make a thorough investigation of these Indians it was necessary for me to travel to Birdseye, Townsend, Clancy, Garrison, Anaconda, and Butte. I found camps of Rocky Boy's Indians at all these places except Butte. There had been a few Indians camped near Butte, but upon investigation, I found that they were Canadian Crees and were not at all affiliated with Rocky Boy's band.

It may be stated here that there are a great many Canadian Crees and Blackfeet Indians roaming over the entire state of Montana, but very few are affiliated with Rocky Boy's band of Chippewas.

I found 17 Indians who are properly wards of the Canadian government affiliated with Rocky Boy's band, and I enclose a separate census of them herewith.

I found 120 Indians affiliated with Rocky Boy's band who, I believe, are Indians properly belonging in the United States. Nearly all of these are Chippewas, but a few of them are Sioux, Assiniboines, and southern Blackfeet; I enclose a census of these herewith. In both of these lists that I am enclosing, the red figures at the left of the census numbers indicate the number of the persons on the census prepared by Rocky Boy in November, 1908. I found this census of Rocky Boy's to be of great help to me. I am enclosing it, with the letter that accompanied it, herewith.

-2-

It was not a difficult matter to determine which of these Indians belong in the United States, and which are properly wards of the Canadian government. I found all the Indians to be very truthful, and they seemed willing to give me all the information that they could concerning the place and tribes to which they belonged. The Canadian Indians told me that they were Crees, or that they were Northern Blackfeet, and made no claim to any rights or benefits under the laws of the United States.

When I explained to Rocky Boy that only those Indians properly belonging in the United States were entitled to benefits under her laws, he did not hesitate to tell me that there were some Indians affiliated with his band, through marriage or otherwise, who were not Chippewas, and who properly belong in Canada. When I questioned those that Rocky Boy reported to be Canadian Indians, they made no effort to deny it, but told me quite freely that they knew they belonged in Canada.

When Rocky Boy prepared his census of November, 1908, he listed all the Indians affiliated with his band from whom he could secure information, regardless of the tribe to which they belonged. I found, and have listed, several Indians that Rocky Boy could not find at the time he made his census, and he has a few Indians listed on his census that I was unable to find. No one could tell me where to find these. All the information I could get concerning them was that they were away out on the plains hunting coyotes. I did find, however, that two of the Indians on Rocky Boy's list are dead, and I am informed that a few of the Indians on his list are in school. I have written to the superintendents of the Indian schools where these children are reported as being in attendance, and have asked them to send me information concerning the Chippewa children in their charge. I respectfully request that I be allowed to furnish you with the information that I receive from these superintendents, at a later date, if the information is material.

I find that the Indians belonging to this band are very poor. Nearly all of them are camped in the neighborhood of slaughter houses near the towns and cities, and their food is limited to bread and refuse that they receive from these slaughter houses. They obtain their flour, clothing, bedding, camp equipage, etc., by selling bead work, and polished cow horns made into hats. A few of the young men work on ranches, and at cutting wood. They seem to be willing to work after they receive employment, but they are backward about looking for work.

These Indians know no home except ragged filthy tents. They have lived in tents during the past winter, and from the condition of their tents, bedding, stoves, etc., I believe that they must have suffered greatly. They sleep on the ground and have very little bedding. Most of their stoves are improvised from old wash-tubs.

It was stated in your letter of instructions that the Secretary of the Interior had directed the Commissioner of the General Land Office to withhold from approval the surveys of certain described lands in the north-

-3-

eastern part of Montana until such times as the Indian Office could take the necessary steps to locate Rocky Boy's band thereon. I was directed to bring this matter to the attention of Chief Rocky Boy and urge upon him the wish of the Office that he and his followers proceed to these lands where an effort would be made to aid them in building houses and purchasing tools with which to cultivate the lands on which they may locate.

I have brought this matter to the attention of Rocky Boy and his followers and find that they are willing and anxious to go to these lands but owing to their destitute condition they are unable to make the journey. Some of the Indians have a few horses but most of the horses are nothing but skin and bones after the hard winter they have just passed through. It would be impossible for these horses to be driven on anything like a long journey. Some of the Indians have no means of transportation whatever.

From Helena, which is the place where the greater part of Rocky Boy's band is camped, it is about 400 miles, as the crow flies to the lands on which it is proposed to locate these Indians. The shortest route that the Indians could take to reach these lands would be considerably over 400 miles. It is impossible for the Indians to make this journey by their own efforts. Their horses are not equal to the task of making the trip, and the Indians have absolutely no means of subsistence on the way.

In view of the long journey, the condition of the Indian's horses and the utter lack of any means of subsistence for the Indians on the way, I would respectfully suggest that a man be sent to these Indians to make an effort to bring them together in one camp at Helena, Montana. After they have been brought together at that place, I would respectfully suggest that the Indians, their horses, wagons, and camp equipage be loaded on a freight train and taken to the lands on which they are to be located.

Respectfully,

(Signed) Thralls W. Wheat  
Through Charles E. Roblin, Special U.S. Indian Agent

(T. W. Wheat, Clerk, Allotting Service)

Original letter on file, Rocky Boy's Agency, Rocky Boy Montana  
Copied by Verne Dusenberry, April 8, 1953



Montana's Landless Indians and the Assimilation Era of Federal Indian Policy: A Case of Contradictions  
**Part 2—Analysis Activity A-3**

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Plains Cree Indians. By Fred Peeso. Near Butte, Montana, 1906.  
From left to right: Os-cha'-mas (Old Boy) and Os-se-me-mas (Young Boy) (twins),  
To'-way (Fine Bow), Wah-wah'-ke-kat, and Joe Little Pine.  
[MHS PAc 955-698, Peeso Collection.]

Montana's Landless Indians and the Assimilation Era of Federal Indian Policy: A Case of Contradictions  
**Part 2—Analysis Activity A-3**

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Horse and Travois. By Frank B. Linderman. Circa 1905, in a Montana town.  
[Used with permission from the archives of the Mansfield Library, University of Montana, Missoula.]

# Montana's Landless Indians and the Assimilation Era of Federal Indian Policy: A Case of Contradictions



## Part 2—Analysis Activity A—4: Montana's Landless Peoples: Cree, Chipepwa And Métis

### A-4 Worksheet

#### DOCUMENTS AND IMAGES:

- Jim Gopher Oral History (excerpt), 1995, MHS OH 542, part of the Métis Cultural Recovery oral history collection.
- Crow Indians Ice Detail (photograph), photographer unknown, circa 1905, MHS PAc 955-789 Marcyes Collection.
- Superintendent W. W. Scott, of Crow Agency Indian School, to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Washington, D.C. (letter), May 7, 1912, MHS RS 266:14/2 Mont. Indian Hist. Jurisdiction Study.
- Paul Bruner Oral History (excerpt), January 19, 1995, MHS OH 1897, from the Métis Cultural Recovery oral history collection.

#### HISTORICAL NOTES:

Former Indian Agent F. D. Pease at the Crow Reservation had noted as early as 1890 the presence of Cree and other landless Indians on the Crow Reservation and had recommended that they be given allotments there. The federal government did not act on his recommendation, perhaps believing that the Crees would not persist in their stay at the Crow Reservation or thinking that the reservation itself, which had already been greatly diminished by the government, would be further diminished and its lands given to white settlers.

#### QUESTIONS:

**Questions, unless otherwise noted, do not need to be answered in complete sentences.**

1. To what tribe does the Gopher family belong?

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2. Why did Chief Plenty Coups go to Washington, D.C., in 1904?

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3. Why did Cree families, like the Gophers, leave the Crow Reservation and go to Browning (on the Blackfeet Reservation)?

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Montana's Landless Indians and the Assimilation Era of Federal Indian Policy: A Case of Contradictions  
**Part 2—Analysis Activity; A-4 Worksheet** *(continued)*

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4. Where/how did the Cree families get food and supplies while camped at Fort Assiniboine? (List two sources.)

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5. Jim Gopher's family moved several times between 1904 and 1916. List four reasons the Cree families in this oral history moved from place to place.

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6. How does Superintendent Scott describe the Cree living on the Crow Reservation in 1912? How are they paid?

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7. Are Superintendent Scott's statements comparing Cree people to Crow people sufficient evidence to support views of the Crow people?

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8. If Canadian Crees had left Canada after the failed Riel Rebellion (1885) and were residing on the Crow Reservation in 1912, how many years would it have been since they had left Canada? Should the Cree children be considered Canadian?

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9. Where did the Cree or Métis people in Bruner's oral history come from? Where in Montana did they live?

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10. According to Bruner, what kinds of work did these Cree and Métis people do? What did they build by hand?

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11. Describe their living conditions.

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12. How does Bruner describe the Cree or Métis people he knew in and around Dupuyer?

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13. Why did many Cree and Métis families from the Dupuyer area leave their homes there, according to Bruner? (List two reasons other than when they had to find work.)

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14. **Thought Question:** What impressions do you get from these three sources about Cree Indians? Why do you think the federal government did not encourage the populations of Cree (at the Crow Reservation) and Métis (in the Dupuyer area) to homestead and to stay on their farms, an option that would have been consistent with the intentions of federal Indian assimilation policies? Answer in complete sentences.

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Jim Gopher Oral History (excerpt from interview summary, pages 1 and 2)

[MHS OH 542. This oral history is part of the Métis Cultural Recovery oral history collection at MHS.]

Tape #1 - Jim Gopher

My name is Jim Gopher, I was born at Chester, Montana 1902 - July 9, 1902. My father's name is John Gopher and my mother's name was Minnie (Chuckie) I guess - I really don't know.

My children I guess I don't need to talk about them.

My father worked for the Crow Chief at Pryor in the Crow Reservation (Chief Plenty Coups). One day we were told that we were going to get enrolled in reservation, 8 families, so my father continued working for this Chief for a long time - in fact, where he is buried now, we lived there at the time. After a while my father kept receiving letters from Browning where he was told that the Cree people were given land and provisions and was included. My mother refused to move over there, she didn't want to leave the Crow reservation. She liked it there. In 1904 he was still getting letters. That spring, the Cree were already building homes and putting in gardens. These are the families who were going to get enrolled. The letters kept coming until some of them consented to move and join the Crees at Browning, in fact all of them decided to go since there was going to be a Sun Dance there (Browning) and my father had to be there, so we all went. And this Chief had gone to Washington, D.C. to see about getting us enrolled and here we all took off for Browning during his absence. When he got back he found the Crees all gone. I regret now, that my father left that place, we could have been still there today.

After the Sun Dance, my father came into Out Bank to work, there was work there building roads. Several Cree men got jobs there, the ones that are here now. So they worked there until snow fell that fall, they had to quit. Several families of us then moved to Havre. There is a hill on this side of Havre called Black Butte, along this creek is where we set up camp, towards winter. After a while there we moved to the out skirts of Fort Assiniboine where the other Crees were living and they invited us to go live there too. So we stayed there and my father got a job working for a white man until it got too cold and got laid off. The Crees would have dances and the soldier caretaker of the Fort, since the soldiers had abandoned it already then, would come and take part at dances. He would sponsor some of them. Finally one day he said, "you people would get provisions in town if you would go to see the boss" (probably the mayor). So the Crees, several of them, went to town to talk to this man, he consented right away to help us and we lived good after that (enough to eat). We continued having our dances, some Black-foot people were there. The Assiniboines would also come to join us. That spring the camp moved up to Beaver Creek, this was in 1913. The people moved from place to place, surviving on game, fishing and everything they could make a living on. Towards late summer, went back to work at the fort haying. My father always worked. Fall time, we moved back to Beaver Creek where the camp was and wintered there. This is where Chief Rocky Boy arrived at this in a small buggy. Right away, he sponsored a ceremony called the "Give-away Dance". He eventually married a woman (Pah Ches) Spotted Blankets mother. We were taken care of - enough to eat - all winter we'd hold our dances. That spring we still lived there, this was 1914, we moved from place to place up here where the reservation is now.

There's something I didn't tell, In the spring of 1913 there was a Sun Dance held at Great Falls and we attended this one too. We returned here as soon as it was over with.

In the summer of 1914, people moved to the place down below, wintered there below where the store is now, about a mile. That spring people moved around again hunting for coyotes out in the flats. Then we moved to the Ft. Belknap reservation for another Sun Dance that summer. We returned again to the Beaver Creek area and wintered there again.



Montana's Landless Indians and the Assimilation Era of Federal Indian Policy: A Case of Contradictions  
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Crow Indians Ice Detail. Crow Indians putting up ice. Circa 1905.  
[Photographer unidentified. MHS PAc 955-789 Marcyes Collection.]

The photograph Crow Indians Ice Detail shows men putting up ice on the Crow Reservation around 1905. Although the individuals in this photograph have not been identified, it is possible that some of them may have been Cree, judging from the different styles of hats and clothing preferred by the Crees. In addition to general labor, Cree Indians on the Crow Reservation built log cabins, tended livestock, and raised horses. According to W. W. Scott, superintendent of the U.S. government Indian school at Crow Agency, the Crees were “intelligent Indians ... They are employed by the Crow in building houses, caring for stock, and in other ways.” (W. W. Scott letter, February 5, 1912.) Superintendent Scott noted that many Crees had registered brands at Helena, just as non-Indian ranchers did.

Montana's Landless Indians and the Assimilation Era of Federal Indian Policy: A Case of Contradictions  
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Superintendent W. W. Scott, of Crow Agency Indian School, to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Washington, D.C. (letter), May 7, 1912, MHS RS 266:14/2 Mont. Indian Hist. Jurisdiction Study.

Education-  
Law & Order.  
12632-1912.  
PHD  
Removal of  
Cree Indians.

5293

Crow Agency, Montana, May 7, 1912.

The Commissioner of Indian Affairs,  
Washington, D.C.

Sir:

Referring to Office letter of the 8th. April, 1912, and requesting information further than that contained in my letter of February 5, 1912, with reference to the Cree Indians now living on this Reservation, I have the honor to submit the following:

It appears that the Crees began coming to the Reservation about the year 1900. They have lived principally in the Pryor District, the Western end of the Reservation, but are now gradually spreading to other sections. Two or three times they have been gathered by the Agency authorities and put off but each time have returned, and in gradually increasing numbers until there are now approximately 100 of the tribe here. They are generally quiet, industrious Indians, many of them mixed bloods, generally of French Canadian blood. They are employed very largely by the Crows who pay for their services in horses—very generally for work which the Crows should do for themselves and very frequently the payment is at extravagant rates. The Crees have in this way collected quite a large number of horses which run on the range. They are a more intelligent Indian than the Crows, better workers and better business men.

(2)

A few Crees have married into the Crow tribe, and these, of course, could not be removed.

It is not thought that these Indians can be disposed of by simply putting them off the Reservation for the reason that, having nowhere to go, they would immediately return. Aside from their horses they have nothing. They are Canadian Indians and it would seem that Canadian Government should look after them.

Very respectfully,

Superintendent,



Montana's Landless Indians and the Assimilation Era of Federal Indian Policy: A Case of Contradictions  
**Part 2—Analysis Activity A-4**

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Paul Bruner Oral History. Excerpts from transcript, pages 2-5. Paul Bruner (PB) is being interviewed by Mickie Shelmerdine (MS) and Anne Dellwo (AD) on January 19, 1995. [MHS OH 1897]

PB: My family came to Valier, Montana, and went on up and homesteaded at Dupuyer. The years that I lived around Dupuyer, I worked and associated with many of the Cree Indians, as we called them. There were the Salois and Sangreys. The oldest one was old Touissant. He lived to be almost 100 years old, and he had a quite a large family there and they all had large families. I worked with those people off and on, and around them, for many years. When I came into Valier, and the Dupuyer area, they were starting the irrigation project, The Valier Land and Water Company. Many times my father took his family up on Birch Creek and we watched them build Swift Dam. The Metis Indians did an awful lot of the hand work. They laid stone by hand, and built the first Swift Dam, as I went there many times and watched them. They blasted rock off the mountain, and rolled it down. These Indians, by hand, laid two walls of rock, about 8' thick. About 100' feet between the two walls of rock, they hauled in dirt and poured it. They had a man there driving about 20 head of loose mules, and they went around, and around, and tamped this dirt. I watched that progress as they built the first Swift Dam.

AD: Tell us what year?

PB: That goes back to between 1913 and 1915. I watched them finish and complete the dam. As I say, most of the hand labor was Cree Indians. The machinery they had was just teams and dump wagons, and Fresnos, and scrapers. They had a gin pole that they used at times, but other than that, there was no machinery to build the first Swift Dam. It was all done by hand. The drilling was done by hand. Black powder was used rather than dynamite. They blasted a tunnel through the mountain, for a spillway. This was all done by hand. Most of the labor that carried out the loose rock and so on, were these Crees, or Indians.

AD: Do you remember any specific names of people?

BP The people that did this work there were quite a few Salois, Boushie, some Fellows, and Sangrey. Those were the names of some of those that lived there the most. They lived and worked there from the beginning of the building of the dam until it was completed.

Very little cement on the dam, just a thin layer on the upstream side and beings it was so steep, they poured that cement as they went up with the dam. The poured the cement, laid the rocks, and hauled in the dirt, and that all worked in one big process

and when they got to the top, the dam was completed. It was 600' long, and about 300' wide (thick) at the bottom, and about 12' feet thick at the top. That, like I said, was all done with hand labor with the Metis Indians.

MS: Did you ever know, Paul, where they came from, these Metis people?

PB: These Metis people had quite a colony in Canada, I believe along between Alberta and the Saskatchewan border. These Indians had colonized and they lived in a big colony there. They were self-supporting, but because they multiplied and their colony grew, the French thought that they might take over Canada so they sent the Army and "whatnot" in and fought them in a battle. The ones that could get away, left and came into the United States. Their leader was a fellow by the name of Riel. He came with them, and got them established here. Then he went on down near Cascade and I understand he was one of the instigators of building and running the St. Peter's Mission out northwest of Cascade.

MS: Did you go to school with any of these Metis people at Dupuyer?

PB: I went to school with many of the Indian kids in Dupuyer. The Salois, and those, they had big families and the ones my age, I went to school with many of them.

MS: Do you think there was anything special about the way they were raised? Was it different than your bringing up?

PB: The Metis Indians, or the Crees, as they came in here, were self-supporting. Now, for some reason, the Government wouldn't give them citizenship to America, but they came in. Where a group would settle, they would go in and work the land, and they raised everything they needed. They had cattle, and horses, vegetables, and grain. They ground their own grain. They were self-supporting, but they never did get title to their land. When Montana was thrown open for homestead, it was all taken away from them. They had to move on, which was a shame. I understand there were many of the Cree children, that were born in Montana, that couldn't even get a citizenship to the United States. There was something wrong there with the Government and the Indians.

MS: Did they have different foods than you had to eat?



PB: Not really. They lived like us. They raised great gardens. They raised grain. They ground their own grain. They threshed their own grain. One of their big things that they raised was lettuce and potatoes. They had huge gardens. The rock piles are still there after 100 years. Some of those rock piles are as big as a house and they cleared the land and farmed it.

MS: How did they get that land?

PB: They just settled on it. When it was homesteaded, it was taken away from them. They didn't have title to it.

MS: Did they have any special remedies for illnesses? Do you recall?

PB: Well, I think possibly they did. I know that the Indians, amongst the ones that I ever knew, I never knew of them having doctors, and so on like that. If there was a case of an illness in the Indians around there, I know that they used our local doctors. And that goes way back to shortly after the turn of the century. But as far as people, if you didn't know they were Crees, you would just think they were American people.

MS: They weren't treated any differently either then?

PB: They weren't treated any differently. An awful lot of those, who were industrious, were very normal, very active people. They would work with you, or they would work for you, or I have worked for them. They were just normal people, but couldn't establish land because the Government wouldn't let them take up homesteads.

MS: Why don't you tell us about Touissant Salois.

PB: Touissant was really the grandfather, or the leader, of the ones that came into Montana. As near as I can relate of things that I have read and heard about them, he came across the line somewhere around 1880, or somewhere back in there. He came in here and he had quite a group of these followers that came with him. They settled along the mountain, like Glacier Park on the Two Medicine River, clear down into Birch Creek and Dupuyer Creek, and clear through to Augusta. West of the town of Choteau, there was one very active group and one of their prominent names is Bruno. There are still some of the Brunos around, but they built log houses. There was a colony of log houses up there. I'd say 30 or 40 log houses were built



for this colony.

MS: You were up there many times?

PB: When I was a boy, and my father had cattle up near the mountains. I have rode, and looked for cattle for people, that turned cattle loose on the range. I have been around this Cree settlement many times. I knew many of them. But they got into a disagreement with some of the white people, and the white people went in one night and burned their houses and they moved, and left. That would go back around after the turn of the century.

AD: Where was this, Paul, that they burned the houses?

PB: They burned the houses that were up on the South Fork of the Teton River. There are a few of the houses there now. If you go west about a mile from where the little log cabins still sit, they had rocks on the side of the hill. It said Bruno Ranch. That is still there. But about a mile west of these cabins, there's quite a cemetery. Quite a lot of people lived there. People in later years helped them, and they put stones on the graves, as I understand. I haven't been to the graveyard for forty years, but there's an awful group of graves there. I'd say maybe 40, maybe 50. They are still there.

Then, over on Deep Creek (south), there is a couple of more Indian cemeteries. One time there was a bunch buried in the trees there and then as civilization come in, and people homesteaded the land, they took those skeletons out of those trees and buried them. I don't know if they are marked or not. But there is a little cemetery up there, and there are Indians buried there. Also, white people. One of the oldest timers in Montana, that rode for the Circle C with Charlie Russell, when he died, he had them take him up there on Deep Creek and bury him with the Indians.

## Montana's Landless Indians and the Assimilation Era of Federal Indian Policy: A Case of Contradictions



### Part 2 – Summary Activity

#### A: Montana's Landless Peoples: Cree, Chippewa, and Métis

Using all of the documents and questions in Section A, write at least four paragraphs answering the following questions. Present your answers to the class.

##### **Summary of Understanding:**

- Who are the landless Indians, and where do they come from?
- What are some of the different ways they survived and supported themselves?
- What prejudices did they face?
- What proposals did you find to get them land?
- What was their relationship to Canada, and why was this important to their fate?



## Part 2—Analysis Activity

### B—1: Cultural Beliefs And White Prejudices

#### B-1 Worksheet

##### DOCUMENTS AND IMAGES:

- “Religious Services by the Cree Indians” (newspaper article), *Anaconda Standard*, May 16, 1906 (page 1).
- Unidentified Cree Man by Al Lucke (photograph), circa 1890, Havre, MT, MHS PAc 955-694 from Lucke Collection.
- “1908 Sun Dance, Rocky Boy’s Band, Helena, Mont.” (transcribed diary), July 5, 6, and 7, 1908, excerpt from diary of John Galen Carter, MHS SC 1978.
- Photographs of artifacts: Child’s Beaded Vest, Cree, circa 1880s, MHS artifact x1976.08.35 from Lohmiller Collection; Buckskin Gauntlet Gloves, 1900, MHS artifact x1966.09.05 a-b; and Cree Child’s Moccasins, around 1900, MHS artifact x1982.24.22 a-b.

##### HISTORICAL NOTES:

John G. Carter was the son of Senator Thomas Carter, who wanted to eliminate the Crow

Reservation entirely so that it would be opened up for settlement by whites. John Carter, his mother, and siblings visited the Fort Belknap Reservation, and he watched several Sun Dance ceremonies between 1904 and 1909, including Cree Sun Dance (Thirst Dance) ceremonies held at Fort Belknap. He took extensive notes on what he witnessed and compiled a diary of those notes. J. G. Carter later became a land commissioner.

Not all tribes have a Sun Dance. The Cree called their ceremony a Thirst Dance, and it is very much like what other tribes called a Sun Dance. A Sun Dance is a spiritual ceremony, not undertaken lightly, and its purpose is for the dancers to pray for the well-being and survival of their families and community. It is customary for dancers to fast throughout the ceremony, which may last two to four days, occasionally longer, and purify themselves in sweat lodge ceremonies as well. The songs sung by the singers at the drum are prayer songs, many of which are specific to the Sun Dance ceremony.

##### QUESTIONS:

**Questions, unless otherwise noted, do not need to be answered in complete sentences.**

1. What religion were the Cree Indians who attended church services in Virginia City in 1906?

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2. What language was the church service in?

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3. Who participated in the Sun Dance held in Helena in July 1908? Who was the Sun Dance leader?

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4. How does Carter describe these Indians and their condition? How were they surviving at this time?

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5. Why did the Chippewa, Cree, and Métis hold a Sun Dance in the city of Helena?

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6. What was the religious affiliation of many of the Métis? Did the Chippewa traditionally have a Sun Dance?

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7. Why did Rocky Boy, Little Bear, and some of the Red River Métis meet at Thomas Carter’s house in Helena? What did they want for their impoverished tribes?

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8. **Thought Question:** How do these documents and photographs reflect the diversity among tribes (e.g., tribal differences among the Cree, Chippewa, and Métis) and the diversity among individual tribal members? Give specific examples. Answer in complete sentences.

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“Religious Services by the Cree Indians”  
(newspaper article), *Anaconda Standard*,  
May 16, 1906 (page 1).

## RELIGIOUS SERVICES BY THE CREE INDIANS

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Special Dispatch to the Standard.

Virginia City, May 16.—A party of Cree Indians arrived in this city a few days ago and camped at the slaughter house about a mile east of town, where a number of citizens gathered to witness a religion service held by Rev. Charles Quinney, rector of St. Paul's Elling Memorial Episcopal church. Rev. Mr. Quinney was for a number of years engaged as a missionary among the Indians in Canada, and speaks the Cree language fluently. The service of the Episcopal church was conducted in the Cree language, the Indians joining in the service with apparent sincerity. A number of hymns were sung in the Indian tongue, some of the Indians proving themselves remarkable good vocalists and perfectly familiar with the hymns.

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Montana's Landless Indians and the Assimilation Era of Federal Indian Policy: A Case of Contradictions  
**Part 2—Analysis Activity B-1**

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Unidentified Cree Man. By Al Lucke.  
Year unknown, probably around 1890.  
[MHS PAc 955-694]



This image cropped from page 115 (q) of John G. Carter's diary.  
Intermediate page 115 has been omitted. [MHS SC 1978.]

1908. SUN DANCE.

115.(o) ROCKY BOY'S BAND. HELENA, MONT.

Time of Dance. July 5, 6 and 7, 1908. (Sunday, Monday and Tuesday.)  
Indians. Rocky Boy's Band, consisting of Chippewa, Plains Cree, and Red River Half Breeds, or Metis. Linguistic Stock, Algonquin. Culture, Buffalo hunting, plains culture, dominant.

Location of camp. On the north side of Helena Avenue, west of the junction of South Rodney street with Helena Avenue.

The camp: Consisted of wall tents, not pitched in a camp circle. Most of the wall tents were in an irregular line and faced east. The tents were old, and the camp was dirty, and the people very poor. The camp numbered about two hundred or two hundred and fifty men, women and children. There were many mixed bloods, the Metis being mixed bloods consisting of French Canadians, mingled with the blood of many tribes, principally Chippewa, Cree, and Assiniboin, and some Mandan, Arickari and Minitari. There was one squaw man in camp, a scotchman. The people are poor, ragged, shabby and dirty. They constitute a wandering and unattached band of poor Indians and mixed bloods, under the leadership of Rocky Boy, a Chippewa. They live off of the offal thrown out by different slaughter houses throughout the Eastern part of Montana, and by money obtained from sale of small Indian trinkets, and by casual and occasional labor. On this occasion they were paid by the Committee in charge of the Helena Fourth of July celebration to put on an Indian show and a Sun Dance, and are allowed to charge admission, twenty five cents or two bits, to the Sun Dance. The Cree element in the camp brought the Sun Dance to this band. The Chippewa never had the Sun Dance, and the Metis are neither white men nor Indians, in the strict sense of the word, but a people apart, and are nominally, at least, Roman Catholics  
Director of Sun Dance: Is Little Bear, a Cree Indian, and a member of Rocky Boy's band. It is believed that Little Bear's helpers, or assistants were drawn from the Cree element in the camp, but that the Chippewa and Canadian or Red River Half Breeds, the Metis, took part in the Sun Dance as dancers.

Not observed: The ceremonies of the Secret lodge, and the selection and cutting down of the center pole were not observed. The formation of the camp and the erection of the secret lodge was not observed. I did not have an interpreter or an informant or informants for this ceremony, but talked to a few of the Indians, and later met the head men with Little Bear and Rocky Boy in council.

Observed: The bringing in of the center pole and materials to build the lodge, and the raising of the center pole and the erection of the lodge. The opening of the lodge, and the Sun Dance.

Photographs: None were taken. Some sketches were taken.

Transportation of these Indians. No Red River carts observed. They have horses, and ordinary dead ax wagons. Not a great many of either, but just enough for them to get around. They have some dogs.

Costumes. Women mostly dressed in old calico and the men wear overalls, old cloth trousers, and shirts. White men's hats are worn. Men and women wear plain moccasins. Such bead work as is in evidence is of the flower Chippewa design, and not the geometric design used by the plains tribes. Men for the most part wear the hair long, and in braids. Younger men have the hair cut short.

Location of Sun Dance lodge. The lodge was located south of the camp, and close to Helena Avenue. The tents of the camp were north of the lodge. The entrance of the lodge faced south. Secret lodge location was not observed, but it is probable that it was north and west of the Sun Dance lodge. A board fence was built around the Sun Dance lodge, and admission was charged beginning with the opening of the dance. The fence was completed as the lodge was completed. At the same time.



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The dance. During the dance no gift giving or other activities were noted in the Sun Dance lodge. It is not known whether the fast was rigidly observed or not. Rocky Boy's band of Indians are extremely poor. The Sun Dance was not a ceremony used by the Chippewa and Red River Half breed members of the band. The construction of the lodge, and its interior arrangement is identical to that of the Assiniboin lodge at Fort Belknap as observed in 1906 and 1907. But the Assiniboin lodge had a center pole carving, and the Rocky Boy lodge run by Little Bear the Cree used a paint design on the center pole composed of black and red bands of paint, six such bands, alternately. In talking to a young member of the band he laughed and said that the white people wanted the Indians to ride naked in the Fourth of July parade up main street. This the band refused to do, not caring to take off their shirts. They wore their shirts in the Sun Dance as well. These Indians apparently do not care to go about in their hides, as do other Indians. It may be the French Canadian in them.

Council with Rocky Boy's Band. On Wednesday, July 8, Rocky Boy, Little Bear, the Scotch squaw man, some Red River mixed bloods, and other members of the band came to our house in Helena, at 644 Bearborn Avenue and held a council on the front lawn with my father. I attended the council. They want the United States to give them a reservation and an agent, or else to provide them with a place on some existing reservation. They are tired of wandering, and find living hard.

Montana's Landless Indians and the Assimilation Era of Federal Indian Policy: A Case of Contradictions  
**Part 2—Analysis Activity B-1**

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Child's beaded vest, front and back. Cree.  
Circa 1880s. [MHS artifact x1976.08.35  
from the Lohmiller Collection.]



“The Crees did beautiful work when it came to buckskin work and sewing. They would take deer hides and elk hides and make their clothing. They were very good at that. If you took a coat to them and gave it to them, they would rip it apart and make you a coat of buckskin just like it.”

(Quote from Paul Bruner, who grew up with the Cree and Métis in the Choteau area in the early 1900s.) [MHS OH 1897 Paul Bruner Oral History, part of the Métis Cultural Recovery oral history collection.]



Montana's Landless Indians and the Assimilation Era of Federal Indian Policy: A Case of Contradictions  
**Part 2—Analysis Activity B-1**

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These buckskin gauntlet gloves are from 1900, a gift to Burr Clark from the chief of the Chippewa tribe in Onigum, Minnesota.

[MHS artifact x1966.09.05 a-b, gift of Griffith Clark in memory of his father, Burr Clark.]



In John Galen Carter's diary he mentioned the very plain clothing wore by most of the Cree and Chippewa at the 1908 Sun Dance in Helena. The extreme poverty of these Indians at this time may have prevented them from acquiring the beads and other materials necessary to make traditionally designed and decorated clothes.

[MHS artifact x1982.24.22 a-b 1900, buckskin, cotton floss]

# Montana's Landless Indians and the Assimilation Era of Federal Indian Policy: A Case of Contradictions



## Part 2—Analysis Activity B—2: Cultural Beliefs and White Prejudices

### B-2 Worksheet

#### DOCUMENTS AND IMAGES:

- “The Cree Indian Nuisance” (newspaper article), *Anaconda Standard*, December 7, 1900 (page 11).
- “Resistance...” (newspaper editorial), *Anaconda Standard*, May 12, 1901 (page 20).
- “The Ishmaelites of the Prairie” (newspaper article), *Anaconda Standard*, June 17, 1901 (page 20).
- Wells’ Family Home (photograph), ca. 1880s, Lewistown, MT, MHS 945-559.
- Latrays, Lefferts, Charettes, and Rasors (photograph), ca. 1901, Maiden, MT, courtesy of Métis Cousins.

#### HISTORICAL NOTES:

The Crees referred to in “The Cree Indian Nuisance” may have been Métis, who had several small communities in that area, or they may have been Cree families wintering there. Historical accounts note that the groups of landless Indians who moved seasonally sometimes overlapped with one another at the

same locations. Some of the Métis were less mobile, as many of these families intended to establish permanent farming communities. The press seldom distinguished between them. Articles such as these three were not uncommon in the *Anaconda Standard*, reflecting the racism of the era.

Augustus Heinze, alluded to in “Resistance...” was a businessman who literally undermined the mines belonging to the Anaconda Company. Heinze was reviled by the Anaconda Company-owned newspaper.

Tom Power, also mentioned in this article, was a senator from Helena who supported Thomas Miles’s efforts to convince the government to deport the Cree in the 1890s.

“Ishmaelites” is a reference to the Biblical story of Abraham’s son, Ishmael, who was cast out into the desert and wandered for many years. The “white man’s burden” refers to the early twentieth-century belief that white society had a responsibility to “civilize” other groups (most notably American Indians, Asians, and Africans).

#### QUESTIONS:

**Questions, unless otherwise noted, do not need to be answered in complete sentences.**

1. In “The Cree Indian Nuisance,” Cree Indians were shown camped in the forest reserves, part of the public domain not open for settlement by homesteaders. How might these Cree people have responded to the article’s point of view?

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Montana's Landless Indians and the Assimilation Era of Federal Indian Policy: A Case of Contradictions  
**Part 2—Analysis Activity; B-2 Worksheet** *(continued)*

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2. What words and phrases in “The Cree Indian Nuisance” reflect racist views?

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3. Why would the ranchers have feared landless Cree would kill and eat their stock? Why did the landless Indians and Métis sometimes resort to killing livestock? (Consider in your reply the impact on wildlife populations between 1850 and 1920 as fur traders, explorers, miners, ranchers, and homesteaders moved into Montana and the West.)

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4. Describe the dwellings and clothing in the two historical photographs. Be specific.

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5. What stereotypes about Indians in general does the article “Resistance...” set up in the first couple of paragraphs? Cite specific words and phrases that contribute to this stereotype.

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6. What actions does this article report the Cree have taken on their own behalf, and what reasons do they purportedly give for not belonging to the nation of Canada?

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7. “Resistance...” ends with a lengthy description of life in the dumps, claiming that for the Crees this is “paradise regained, the real unadulterated Garden of Eden...” Find and list three examples of irony or sarcasm on the last page of this article. What was the author’s purpose in using this kind of language?

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8. Comment on the cartoon illustrations in “Resistance...” What did this article intend its readers to infer from these pictures?

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9. Why do you think the editor used the term “Ishmaelites” to characterize the landless Indians? (See historical note for a definition of the term.)

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10. What three assumptions does “The Ishmaelites of the Prairie” make about the identity of landless Indians in Montana?

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11. In “The Ishmaelites of the Prairie,” the following verbs/phrases are used to describe the actions of Crees: “hovered,” “swarmed,” “thriving on filth,” “constantly moving from place to place,” and “breeds microbes and disturbance.” What association was the author/editor asking readers to make and why?

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12. The article “Ishmaelites” repeatedly refers to the Cree as Canadian. Why?

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13. **Thought Question:** Do the newspaper descriptions of Cree living conditions match what you saw in the historical photographs? Why might the newspaper have described living conditions the way that it did? Answer in complete sentences.

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“The Cree Indian Nuisance” (newspaper article), reprinted from the *Dupuyer Acantha* in the *Anaconda Standard*, December 7, 1900 (page 11).

## THE CREE INDIAN NUISANCE

From the *Dupuyer Acantha*

About one year ago the *Acantha* found reason to call attention to the fact that a large number of Cree Indians had taken possession of the forest reserve west of town and were making themselves perfectly at home where a citizen of the United States was forbidden to trespass. The proper authorities took notice of the fact and realized that the presence of these Indians on the reservation was a violation of the law for the preservation of forests, as well as a menace to the peaceful enjoyment of the rights of property by our citizens. The appropriation for forest reserves had been exhausted, and red tape did the rest, so that the Indians remained in possession of what the Rounder aptly dubbed Utopia until spring revived their tendency to rove, when many left on their annual campaign against the slop barrels and garbage piles of the centers of population.

Now winter is back again, and the problem again presents itself: the Indians must eat in order to maintain their individual existence until the frost thaws out of their commissaries at the back doors in Great Falls and other large towns, and meanwhile the ranchman, in his struggle to provide for his family and pay his taxes, has to keep a watchful eye on his stock in the day time and has troubled dreams of the “white man’s burden” at night.

This matter of the Crees has been the subject of a great deal of official correspondence, and one governor of Montana made a trip to Washington in search of a solution of the problem, but the nuisance is still fastened upon us, and the forest reserve is again assuming the appearance of an Indian reservation for the winter. If the three prisoners in the *Dupuyer* jail should be convicted of cattle stealing, an example would be made, but the clamor of the hungry stomachs belonging to the rest of the tribe admits of no remedy but a plentiful supply of meat, and well the Indian knows that a little care on his part will allay his hunger and render a conviction practically impossible.



“Resistance...” (newspaper editorial), *Anaconda Standard*, May 12, 1901 (page 20).



RESISTANCE to the efforts of the United States government to oust them from Montana back into Canada, where they belong, is promised by the Crees. The tribe, however, will not go to war with the United States after the manner of the Sioux and Apaches. The

people of Montana need not sit up nights in hourly expectation of ruthless and universal massacre. They can still go about their usual employments by day without danger of being suddenly disemboweled by the tomahawk and snatched bald-headed by the scalping knife. They can still attend prayer meetings at night free from carking anxiety lest the services be violently interrupted by a detachment of red troops with harsh, shrill voices and murderous intent.

Let not Montana's heart be troubled. At least not on that score. So far as the Crees are concerned, grimvisaged war has smoothed his wrinkled front. No longer do the Crees participate in feats of broil and battle. The tumult and the shouting died long ago for them. Full many a moon has waxed and waned since the Crees exhibited themselves in battle's magnificently stern array.

For all that, the Crees will resist the United States government. They have learned a few tricks from Heinze. They have retained counsel, and will seek to convince the courts that wherever they are, they have a right to be; that if their ancestors were Canadians, it does not follow that they themselves must follow in their ancestors' footsteps and be Canadians to the end of time; that while the curse of Canadianship may descend unto the third and fourth generation, to continue it indefinitely in cruel and unusual punishment within the meaning of the



*The Modern Cree on the Warpath.*

constitution; that the United States government, whatever its treaties with Great Britain may be, never yet has passed a Cree exclusion act; and finally that if it ever was a crime for them to sneak into Montana, they have been here long enough to avail themselves of the statute of limitations.

Aside from the legal considerations of the case, the Crees have decided that Montana is their natural habitat. In the early days before the buffaloes had all been killed off by hunters, who sold the skins to Tom Power at Fort Benton for a red shirt, a gallon of brimstone whiskey, a pair of boots, a shave, a haircut, and one dozen assorted poker chips per skin—in those days of the forest primeval, the prairie unirrigated, and the mountain

unmined, the buffaloes, led on by instinct, would travel hundreds of miles, if need be, to the salt licks. In like manner are the Crees irresistibly attracted to the garbage dumps of Montana, nor can any Anglo-American treaties fixing their habitation forever in the Dominion of Canada swerve them. Owing to the sparseness of population such oases in the desert of the Northwest Territory are exceedingly rare; and when indeed one is discovered it is of small size and inferior quality—totally inadequate to the support of any considerable number of Crees for considerable period. The Montana dumps on the other hand are not only rich in nutriment and infinite in variety of material, but are daily replenished from an inexhaustible source of supply.

Compared with the bill of fare offered by the back yards of a Canadian Pacific way station, the Butte dump is a Waldorf-Astoria dining room, and the Anaconda dump a Delmonico banquet hall. Not Lucullus himself nor old Heliogabalus set before his guests a more extensive and diversified cuisine. Here life is one long, long feast. Here is eating and drinking and rising up to play craps. Here is no taking thought of the morrow, what they shall eat, of what they shall drink. Without money and without price, they find the white men bringing them food by the cartload and spreading it out before them in riotous profusion.

To the Crees the garbage dumps of Montana are paradise regained, the real, unadulterated Garden of Eden, from which they refuse to be driven out by anything so little like the angel of the Lord as the United States government. They will resist to the last court, the last ditch, the last dump.



*Be It Ever So Humble, There Is No Place  
Like Home.*



“The Ishmaelites of the Prairie” (newspaper article), *Anaconda Standard*, June 7, 1901 (page 20).

### **The Ishmaelites of the Prairie**

**E**VER since the Riel rebellion of 1885, for which the instigator, Louis Riel, paid the penalty of his life to the dominion government, the Cree Indians have been a plague to the people of Montana. Refusing to accept the bounty of either nation, the Crees have hovered around the border line, living on stray cattle and whatever they can find loose on the prairie. The “range calf gone astray” is the particular prey of these gipsies of the Northwest.

About seven years ago an attempt was made by the state officials to deport these undesirable nomads to Canada, their natural stamping ground. Cree Indians were rounded up from all over the state and escorted across the border, where they were expected to remain, rightful subjects of the English crown. But they refused to be deported. The Canadian government had planted a wholesome fear in their hearts for their part in the massacre of '85, and they swarmed

back almost as soon as their escorts were out of sight. It would take a small standing army, standing mostly on the Canadian line, to keep the deported Crees properly deported. Occasionally reports of their depredations are heard of, but the Cree question remains unsettled.

Now, when the state was beginning to get rid of the epidemic of smallpox, with which it has been cursed, the Cree bobs up again. Thriving on filth, constantly moving from place to place, as a disseminator of disease he is a howling success. It is only by accident that the health officers learn of the disease when the Cree is afflicted, and even then he scorns the blessings of civilization and refuses to be vaccinated. That man will win the gratitude of the people who will make a satisfactory disposition of this vulture of the garbage pile, who breeds microbes and disturbance and refuses to be governed.



Montana's Landless Indians and the Assimilation Era of Federal Indian Policy: A Case of Contradictions  
**Part 2—Analysis Activity B-2**

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Wells' Family Home, ca. 1880s, Lewistown, Montana. [MHS 945-559.]



Latrays, Lefferts, Charettes, and Rasors, ca. 1901, Maiden, Montana.  
[Courtesy of Métis Cousins.]

# Montana's Landless Indians and the Assimilation Era of Federal Indian Policy: A Case of Contradictions



## Part 2 – Summary Activity

### B: Cultural Beliefs and White Prejudices

Using all of the documents and questions in Section B, write at least four paragraphs answering the following questions. Present your answers to the class.

#### Summary of Understanding:

- Find examples to share that emphasize the diversity among tribes and among individual tribal members.
- Describe the tribes' living conditions. What actions are the tribes taking to improve their lives?
- What is the tribes' ultimate goal?
- How are the tribes and their members portrayed in the press?

# Montana's Landless Indians and the Assimilation Era of Federal Indian Policy: A Case of Contradictions



## Part 2—Analysis Activity C—1: Deportation And Homelessness

### C-1 Worksheet

#### DOCUMENTS AND IMAGES:

- Report Committee of the Privy Council, Canada, March 1892, with letter to U.S. Secretary of State Blaine from Julian Paunceforte, government report (copy) and attached correspondence. MHS SC 475, Thomas O. Miles Papers.
- Letter from U.S. Dist. Attorney E. Weed to U.S. Secretary of War, Dec. 2, 1892. MHS SC 475, Thomas O. Miles Papers.
- Letter from Montana Gov. Toole to Thomas Miles of Silver Bow, Dec. 3, 1892, MHS SC 475, Thomas O. Miles Papers, and transcription.

#### HISTORICAL NOTES:

In 1892, Thomas O. Miles of Silver Bow, Montana, sent a series of letters to Governor J. K. Toole, U.S. Attorney Elbert Weed (later mayor of Helena), Senator Tom Power, and U.S. Secretary of State James C. Blaine in an effort to have Cree Indians camped in the Butte-Silver Bow area deported to Canada.

Miles objected to their presence in Montana on the grounds that they were Canada's Indians and had a reputation for stealing livestock. Throughout 1892, Miles kept up correspondence with these men, all of whom favored deportation, and they in turn contacted the Canadian (British) government and U.S. war department officials. In 1893, Cree Indians, as well as other landless Indians, were rounded up and marched to Chinook, Montana, where the U.S. Army escorted them to the Canadian line. Many of them returned within weeks to Montana.

Twenty years after that deportation, three new counties were created along the Canadian border in the young state of Montana, encompassing land that was the traditional hunting territory of many tribes, including the Cree. These counties, ironically, were named for three of the men who had worked so hard to have the Cree permanently deported: Hill, Blaine, and Toole. Miles, who initiated many of the complaints that led to the 1893 deportation of Canadian Crees, was himself a Canadian immigrant to Montana.

#### QUESTIONS:

**Questions, unless otherwise noted, do not need to be answered in complete sentences.**

1. According to the Privy Council report, did the Canadian colonial government know of any Cree Indians having “gone across the line” from Canada (then still a British possession) into Montana? Who does the report suggest the “Cree” in Montana are?



2. How did Canadian authorities react to the idea of deporting the Cree Indians from Montana to Canada?

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3. In U.S. District Attorney Elbert Weed's letter to the U.S. Secretary of War (December 2, 1892), what evidence does he provide as proof that the Indians Miles has complained of are Canadian "renegade Crees"?

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4. **Thought Question:** In his December 2, 1892, letter, U.S. District Attorney Weed wrote about the "renegade Indians": "They are mere trespassers... Their presence here is very offensive to all settlers who are unfortunate to live in the vicinity of their camps. It is the habit of these renegade Indians to wantonly destroy all game, without regard to local laws and regulations, to steal the stock of the white settlers, and generally subsist by larceny and plunder." Consider this statement as if it were applied to white frontiersmen, early miners, missionaries, and others who came West prior to treaties and/or who squatted on Indian lands. Consider the following questions and then write a paragraph from the Cree perspective regarding white squatters on Indian land. Use complete sentences.

- Whose land did the Euro-American immigrants settle on?

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- What did Euro-American settlers in the West eat?

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- Whose food supply did their meat come from (in other words, who hunted here first)?

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- Did Europeans coming to the Americas or white people coming to Montana Territory (including the tens of thousands of homesteaders at the turn of the twentieth century) understand or follow indigenous local laws and regulations regarding hunting?

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- Considering your answers above, write a paragraph from the Cree perspective regarding white squatters on Indian lands.

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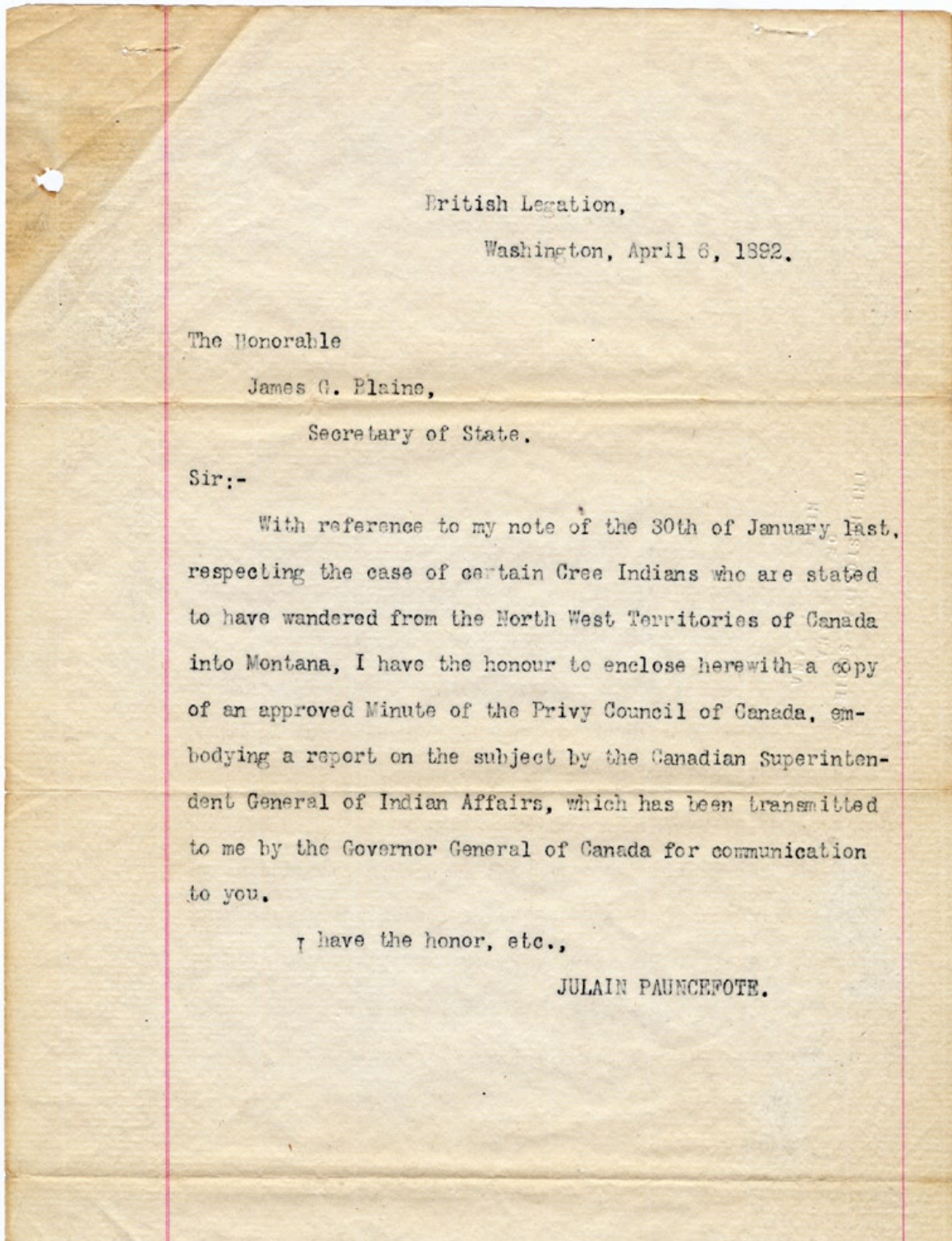
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Report Committee of the Privy Council, Canada, March 1892, with letter to U.S. Secretary of State Blaine from Julian Paunceforte, government report (copy) and attached correspondence, MHS SC 475, Thomas O. Miles Papers.





Privy Council

C A N A D A.

Certified Copy of a Report of a Committee of  
the Honourable the Privy Council, approved by  
His Excellency the Governor General in Council,  
on the 29th March, 1892.

The Committee of the Privy Council have had under  
consideration a despatch dated 28th January, 1892, from  
Her Majesty's Minister at Washington, enclosing a copy of a  
note dated 26th January, 1892, received from the United  
States Government on the subject of certain Cree Indians  
who are stated to have wandered across the boundary line  
from the North West Territory of Canada into Montana.

The Superintendent General of Indian Affairs to whom  
the despatch was referred states that a copy of the despatch  
and enclosures were forwarded to the Indian Commissioner  
for Manitoba and the North West Territories for his report  
on the statements made therein, and a letter dated the 17th  
of March instant has been received from that office, in which  
he states that, with the exception of a few Indians who go  
for the purpose of visiting their friends in the United  
States and returning, nothing is known of Cree Indians  
having gone across the line since certain refugees went  
over after the Half-breed and Indian troubles in the  
North West in 1885.

The Indian Commissioner suggests the possibility of  
refugee French Half-breeds having been confounded with  
Cree Indians.



The Minister states further with regard to the suggestion made by Mr. Elaine in his letter that the Canadian authorities should co-operate with those of the United States in proper measures for the removal of the Indians in question from the territory of that government, that there would seem to be no objection, upon the Department of Indian Affairs being advised of the time and place at which any Indians belonging to Canada, who have been guilty of marauding in the United States territory, would be brought to the boundary line, to instructions being sent to the officers of the North West Mounted Police to despatch a detachment of Police to the point for the purpose of taking over from the military of the United States the Indians or such of them as belong to Canada.

The Committee concurring in the above report, recommend that Your Excellency be moved to forward a copy hereof to Her Majesty's Minister at Washington.

All which is respectfully submitted for your Excellency's approval.

JOHN J. MC GEE,  
Clerk of the Privy Council.



Montana's Landless Indians and the Assimilation Era of Federal Indian Policy: A Case of Contradictions  
Part 2—Analysis Activity C-1

Letter from U.S. Dist. Attorney E. Weed to U.S. Secretary of War,  
Dec. 2, 1892, MHS SC 475, Thomas O. Miles Papers.

ELBERT D. WEED,  
U. S. ATTORNEY.  
JOHN M. McDONALD,  
ASSISTANT U. S. ATTORNEY.

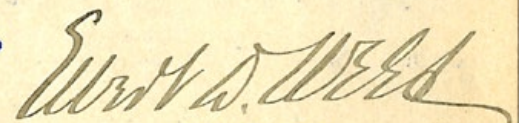
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE.  
OFFICE OF UNITED STATES ATTORNEY,  
DISTRICT OF MONTANA.  
HELENA, - - MONTANA. Dec. 2, 1892.

The Hon. Secretary of War,  
Washington, D. C.

Sir:

I enclose herewith printed copy of letter of Thomas O. Miles, Silver Bow Junction, Montana, relating to a large number of Cree Indians, who are now encamped in Silver Bow and Deer Lodge Counties, Montana. These Indians are renegade Crees, from the British Possessions. They belong across the border, and should be under the charge of the officials of the Canadian Government. They are mere trespassers, within the United States. Their presence here is very offensive to all settlers who are unfortunate enough to live in the vicinity of their camps. It is the habit of these renegade Indians to wantonly destroy all game, without regard to local laws or regulations, to steal the stock of the settlers, and, generally to subsist by larceny and plunder. They have no business whatever here, and should be immediately removed to the British Possessions, where they belong. I respectfully recommend that such measures as may be necessary for this purpose, be taken without delay by the general Government, believing that in the event nothing should be done looking to their removal, there is reason to apprehend serious difficulty between them and the white settlers.

Very respectfully,

  
U. S. Attorney.



Letter from Montana Gov. Toole to Thomas Miles of Silver Bow,  
Dec. 3, 1892, MHS SC 475 Thomas O. Miles Papers.



THE  
**State of Montana**  
Governor's Office

Helena, Dec 3<sup>rd</sup> 1892

Thos. O. Miles Esq.,  
Silver Bow  
Montana

Dear Sir  
I am in receipt of yours  
of the 27<sup>th</sup> Nov. re Cree Indians,  
concerning their with the State  
and War Department looking  
to the removal of these Indians  
across the border has been un-  
availing and I am powerless in  
the premises. I realize as much as  
you do that these people are not  
fully undesirable. But that  
they are a positive detriment and  
a continual menace to people  
in sparsely settled communities,  
the last expression of the Gov.





THE  
State of Montana

Governor's Office

Helena, \_\_\_\_\_ 189

Department is to the effect that  
Harrington investigation discloses  
the fact that the Che Indians  
are a very useful and neces-  
sary people in this country  
and that if they were removed  
"they would be very much  
missed" by our citizens

I will send you a printed  
copy of the correspondence  
as soon as I receive it  
Yours truly  
H. H. H.

Transcript of letter from Governor J. K. Toole to Thomas O. Miles,  
Dec. 3, 1892 (from MHS SC 475 Thomas O. Miles Papers).

Ths. O. Miles Esq.  
Silver Bow  
Montana

Dear Sir,

I am in receipt of yours of the 27<sup>th</sup> Nov in re Cree Indians.

Correspondence with the State and War Departments looking to the removal of these Indians across the border has been un availing and I an powerless in the premises. I realize as much as you do that these people are not only undesirable, but that they are a positive detriment and a continuous menace to people in sparsely settle communities.

The last expression of the War Department is to the effect that thorough investigation discloses the fact that the Cree Indians are a “very useful and necessary people” in this country and that if they were removed “they would be very much missed” by our citizens.

{letter is cut here}

I will send you a printed copy of the correspondence as soon as I receive it.

Yours truly,  
J. K. Toole



# Montana's Landless Indians and the Assimilation Era of Federal Indian Policy: A Case of Contradictions



## Part 2—Analysis Activity C—2: Deportation and Homelessness

### C-2 Worksheet

#### DOCUMENTS AND IMAGES

- “The House” (newspaper article), *Helena Daily Independent*, January 2, 1895 (page 2).

#### HISTORICAL NOTES:

The accusation in this document of Cree Indians having “terrorized” white settlers (in the United States) is not supported by

historical evidence. There were occasional complaints of Cree killing livestock to eat.

A joint memorial is a type of legislation where state officials petition a national body (e.g., federal agencies, Congress, or the president). A memorial claims that the asking body has no jurisdiction to act on its own. A memorial has no official standing and is a request rather than a legislative order.

#### QUESTIONS:

**Questions, unless otherwise noted, do not need to be answered in complete sentences.**

1. What two options did the House Joint Memorial, introduced by Hedges in 1895, suggest regarding the several hundred Cree Indians assumed to be former participants in the Riel (Northwest) Rebellion?

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2. How does the memorial depict the “Cree” Indians? List at least four descriptions from the memorial:

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3. To whom does the memorial contrast the “outlaw” Indians? Why do you think the authors make this distinction?

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4. Who are the “industrious and intelligent citizens” referred to in the memorial? Are the Cree included in this definition?

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5. What does the portion of the joint memorial quoted in the last paragraph reveal about what whites believed would be the future of Indian tribes and of Indian lands?

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6. **Thought Question:** Explain how the third paragraph of the memorial defines the values of the United States/white America with regards to its relationship with indigenous peoples. Answer in complete sentences.

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"The House" (newspaper article),  
*Helena Daily Independent*,  
January 2, 1895 (page 2).

## THE HOUSE

From Wednesday's Daily Independent.

Hedges introduced in the house a joint memorial to congress representing there are within the borders of the state several hundred Cree Indians, formerly domiciled in British territory, but expatriated in the Riel rebellion.

"We have appealed to the national authorities to return them to where they came from or provide for their care and support," says the memorial. "It is claimed that the government is powerless in the matter. Meantime, these outlaws are roaming in and out of the Indian reservations and the sparsely settled portions of our state, terrorizing our citizens, helping them selves to what they need or like, utterly regardless of the right of property. Their unchecked career of lawlessness is making them bolder in crimes and breeding discontent among our more settled and partially civilized tribes. We most respectfully represent that it is in the power and it is the duty of the general government to remove them or support them in some way consistent with the peace, safety and rights of our own people. By some arrangement with the Indians now settled on reservations in the state, these roving outlaws and robbers could be settled, and with some assistance, made self-supporting, or at least harmless to others inclined to settlement and cultivation of the soil."

It is further set out that "from long and close observation of the Indian as he is, the only true policy for any permanent benefit to him is to settle him on lands in severalty and by partial aid and encouragement constrain him to self-support by the means ordained by the Creator. These large Indian reservations, covering some of the best portions of our state, are capable of supporting in plenty many thousands of industrious and intelligent citizens. Believing this course recommended the only one that promises any future to the fading Indian tribes, as advantageous to the poor Indian, as beneficial to the approaching tide of white settlement, we urge its early adoption."

The memorial was sent to the printing committee.



# Montana's Landless Indians and the Assimilation Era of Federal Indian Policy: A Case of Contradictions



## Part 2—Analysis Activity C—3: Deportation and Homelessness

### C-3 Worksheet

#### DOCUMENTS AND IMAGES:

- Robert Zion Interview (oral history excerpt), June 27, 1994, MHS OH 1657 Bob Zion Oral History, part of the Métis Cultural Recovery oral history collection.
- Gabriel Dumont (photograph), photographer unknown, 1885, Fort Benton, MT, MHS PAC 942-021.
- Beaded saddle used by Gabriel Dumont (image of object), 1870, MHS artifact x1964.16.01.
- Ursuline sisters and students at St. Peter's Mission (photograph), photographer unknown, circa 1880, MHS PAC 82-47.
- Cree Indians in Havre, Mont, 1892 (photograph), MHS Pac 955-707 from the Al Lucke Collection.

#### HISTORICAL NOTES:

Bob Zion grew up in the Choteau area, living and working among the Métis and Cree there

in the 1920s and 1930s. He knew many of the elder generation who had come from Canada and had friends among the younger generation born in the United States. In this oral history he shares a story told to him by Jess Gleason, who witnessed the deportation of the Cree and Métis in 1896. In his own recollections of the elders, Zion remembers, among other things, that many of them were afraid that the Canadian government or military would one day arrive to punish them for having supported the 1885 Riel Rebellion—a rebellion that would have established for them a legal system, government, and lands of their own in Canada. Many of the Métis in Canada had been part of well-established colonies until the British forced them out in a continuing struggle to assert domination over colonial territories once controlled by the French.

“ML” in this interview is Melinda Livezey, a Métis woman who was documenting oral histories for the Montana Métis.

#### QUESTIONS:

**Questions, unless otherwise noted, do not need to be answered in complete sentences.**

1. What does Zion's interview say about the economic role of the Métis in and around cities like Helena and Great Falls?

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2. What did Pershing and the 10th Cavalry do?

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3. How does Zion describe the line of Métis, as told to him by Jess Gleason, marching through Choteau?

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4. What did some of the Métis do while they were being marched through Choteau? Why?

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5. How long did many of the Métis stay in Canada after they were deported?

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6. Who were Gabriel Dumont and Louis Riel? Where was Riel employed while living in Montana?

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7. **Thought Question:** How does Zion's view of the Métis differ from that expressed in Governor Toole's letter and the house memorial (see C1 and C2)? Why do you think these differences exist? Answer in complete sentences.

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## Montana's Landless Indians and the Assimilation Era of Federal Indian Policy: A Case of Contradictions

### Part 2—Analysis Activity C-3

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**Robert Zion Interview (excerpts from pages 11-12 of transcript)** [MHS Research Archives OH 1657]  
Melinda Livezey (ML) is conducting the interview on June 27, 1994. It begins with Bob Zion (BZ) talking:

Speaking of lineage, these Metis people you could go either to the white side or the European side, and doggone it, it's a proud lineage. They had nothing to be ashamed of. Well, to continue this story, in 1895, the Montana people were getting very incensed about the Metis having their little encampments on the fringes of Helena, Great Falls, and whatever. They were really causing no trouble and in a way they were helping, working for people.

ML: They were providing a labor pool.

BZ: Yes, they were providing a labor pool, but word finally got back to Washington, D. C., "that we've got to do something". So, Pershing was a young lieutenant

June 27, 1994

11/12/19

up at Fort Assiniboine, and they gave him the commission to take a troop of 10th Cavalry, and start down in Helena (this was told to me by Jess Gleason), and gather these people up, wherever they could find them, and herd them back to Canada. Jess Gleason told me he was just a little boy, I think he was 5 years old, and when they came through Choteau, his older sister was holding him by the hand there on the corner where the old Citizens State Bank is, and here they came, single file, from clear out between Rattlesnake and Priest Butte, that's where the road was then. He said you could see the dust rising and pretty soon, here they came, single file. Wagons, red river carts, horses, dogs, kids, men, women, some of them riding, some of them walking. As they came through Choteau, some of them tried to escape and hid behind buildings on main street, and these black troops would spur their horses around and bring them back, and get them all lined up again.

He said, "Those troopers, their saddles and their brass work, just shone. Boy! They were really polished. I got so excited my nose started bleeding and I had a white sailor suit on, and my sister was so disgusted, as I got blood all over my little sailor suit. (Laugh)

That evening, they went out to the campground, out in the general area where Dr. Schwedhelm's house is now on Spring Creek, and they were camped out there. They had their cook fires, their tripods, and they were cooking supper out there. It was a quiet evening, and the smoke was going right straight up from the campfires. Little kids were running around. Just sort of a peaceful-evening atmosphere camping. The soldiers had camped. I'll never forget that as long as I live. It just sticks in my visual memory to have seen that."

Then they continued on up, and I believe this group, they put 'um on the train up at Blackfoot, east of Browning. Then they took them across the border at Sweet Grass. Some of them no sooner got up there, and they were back in Choteau. One of the nice young





Gabriel Dumont, 1885, photographer unknown. [MHS PAc 942-021.]



Saddle, with elaborate Métis beading, used by Gabriel Dumont. Made in 1870. [MHS artifact x1964.16.01.]

Gabriel Dumont came to Montana in 1885 to encourage Louis Riel to come to Canada and assist him in establishing a government and territory for the Métis there. At the time, Louis Riel was teaching at St. Peter's Mission school on the Two Medicine River. Riel was a well-known figure in Montana. He tried to get citizenship and voting rights for the Métis, wrote letters to the paper for their cause, and made friends with many of Helena's citizens and city officials. Riel lived in Helena for a short time and during this time applied for U.S. citizenship. Riel was tried in Canada after the rebellion and hung by the Canadian government, in spite of being a Montanan at the time. Riel was also a poet, fluent in three languages, and a strong advocate against the whiskey trade.

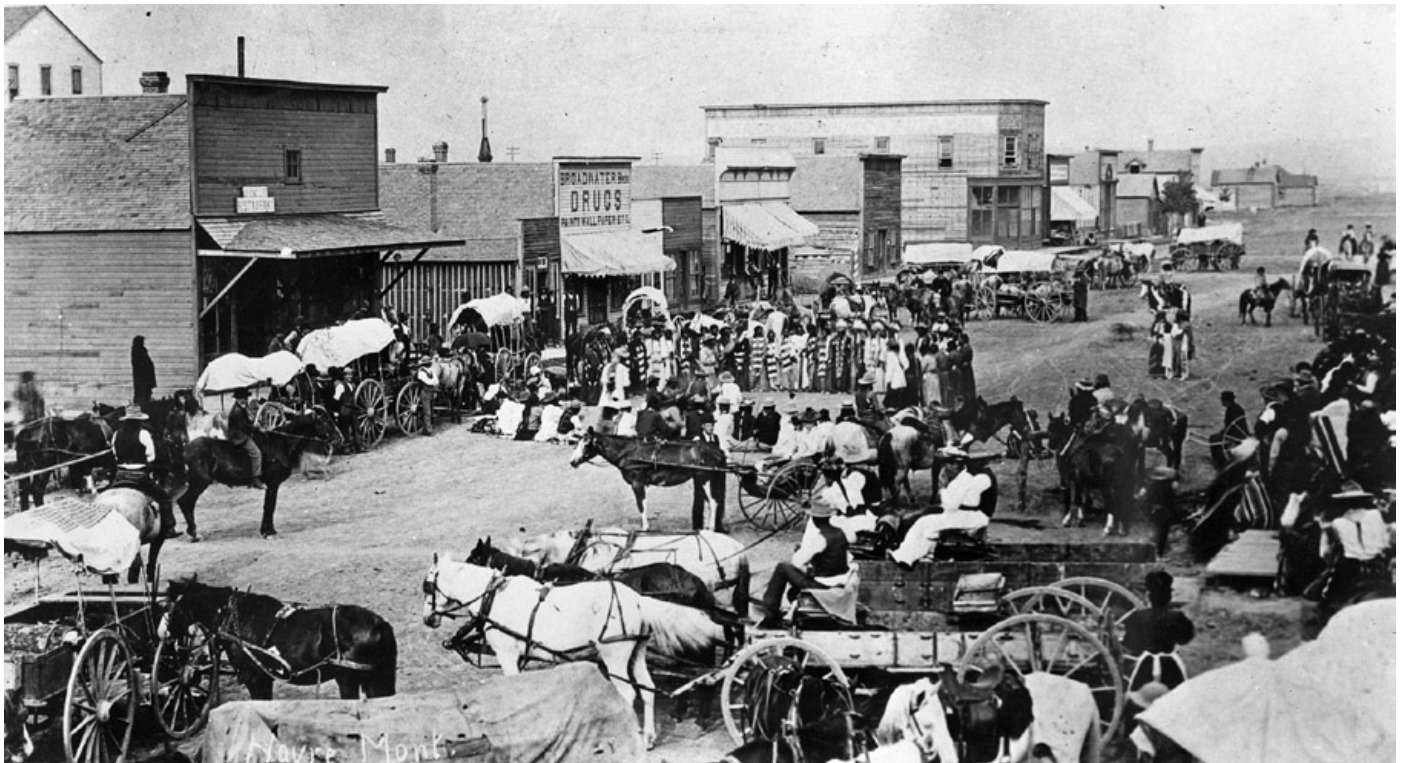
Dumont fled to Montana after the rebellion, fearing retribution. The Montana Historical Society has some of his letters expressing his concerns about his own safety if he should return to Canada, which he did around 1890. He died peacefully in Manitoba, Canada, in 1906.

Montana's Landless Indians and the Assimilation Era of Federal Indian Policy: A Case of Contradictions  
**Part 2—Analysis Activity C-3**

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Ursuline nuns and students at St. Peter's Mission, Montana, circa 1880. St. Peter's was founded for the Blackfeet, but many Métis children attended as well. Louis Riel taught here in 1883 and 1884. [MHS PAc 82-47. Photographer unknown.]



Cree Indians in Havre, Mont, 1892. North side of First Street.  
[MHS PAc 955-707 from the Al Lucke Collection.]

## Montana's Landless Indians and the Assimilation Era of Federal Indian Policy: A Case of Contradictions



### Part 2 – Summary Activity

#### C: Deportation and Homelessness

Using all of the documents and questions in Section C, write at least three paragraphs answering the following questions. Present your answers to the class.

#### Summary of Understanding:

- Why does the United States want to characterize the landless Indians as Canadian, and what is their proposal for dealing with them?
- What is the U.S. government's goal for land in Montana—who do they want to settle here, and how do the landless Indians fit into that vision?
- How had the Métis integrated into Montana communities? Provide examples of Métis contributions.



# Montana's Landless Indians and the Assimilation Era of Federal Indian Policy: A Case of Contradictions



## Part 2—Analysis Activity D—1: A Reservation is Created

### D-1 Worksheet

#### DOCUMENTS AND IMAGES:

- “Good Riddance to Them” (newspaper article), *Anaconda Standard*, July 25, 1909 (page 28).
- Land Commissioner S. Aufer to Gov. Norris (letter and transcript), July 17, 1908, MHS MC 35:316-1, Montana Governors Papers.
- “Thanks to the Hills” (transcribed newspaper article), *Anaconda Standard*, October 29, 1909 (page 14).
- “Rocky Boy Indian Lands Open for Settlement” (newspaper article), *Chicago Suburbanite Economist*, Chicago, Illinois, February 18, 1910 (page 7).
- Two photographs: Andrew Valler, ... Wife and Children, by Frank B. Linderman, Flathead Reservation, courtesy Archives of the Mansfield Library, University of Montana, #007-VIII-197; and Quilled Moccasins, 1880, MHS artifact x1900.03.11 from W.A. Clark, the Mary Ronan Indian Collection.

#### HISTORICAL NOTES:

In 1909 the Department of the Interior ordered a census of Rocky Boy's band. Afterward, Senator Dixon of Montana urged Congress to appropriate funds for the establishment of a 1.2 million-acre reservation in northeast Montana for the Chippewa and Cree. A few years earlier these lands (in what was then Valley County) had been set aside from settlement by whites; nevertheless, hundreds of white squatters (illegal settlers) had moved there and started farming. White settlers, at the encouragement of the owners of the Great Northern Railway—J. J. and L. W. Hill—successfully protested the reservation, resulting in even more years of homelessness for the impoverished Rocky Boy and his combined bands of Chippewa and Cree.

#### QUESTIONS:

**Questions, unless otherwise noted, do not need to be answered in complete sentences.**

1. As you read “Good Riddance to Them,” list here at least 10 of the 20 terms (nouns, adjectives, phrases) used to depict Rocky Boy and his band. How would you categorize these terms: positive, neutral, or negative?

1) \_\_\_\_\_

6) \_\_\_\_\_

2) \_\_\_\_\_

7) \_\_\_\_\_

3) \_\_\_\_\_

8) \_\_\_\_\_

4) \_\_\_\_\_

9) \_\_\_\_\_

5) \_\_\_\_\_

10) \_\_\_\_\_

2. “Good Riddance...” states that Rocky Boy’s band was “in no sense a Chippewa tribe.” This charge counters the extensive historical evidence on the commonness of intertribal marriage and the merging of different tribal communities including evidence provided by material culture (see pages 110–11). Why do you think the article would try to make a point of the tribe not being a “real” tribe?

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3. According to “Good Riddance,” who was responsible for the Cree and Chippewa not having allotments on the Flathead reservation? (You will need to recall information from the Historical Context for this answer.)

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4. Why does this article emphasize repeatedly the opinion that these Indians will never settle down and stay in one place?

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5. The last section of “Good Riddance” compares the landless Chippewa and Cree to the “Mallungeons.” How does A.W.G. (the author) define and describe the Mallungeons and the life they lead (according to him)? Be thorough in your answer.

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Montana's Landless Indians and the Assimilation Era of Federal Indian Policy: A Case of Contradictions  
**Part 2—Analysis Activity; D-1 Worksheet** (*continued*)

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6. Most white Montanans received their information from articles such as “Good Riddance.” How might this fact have influenced the last-minute withdrawal of the proposed reservation?

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7. According to Sigurd Aufer's letter, written while the Valley County lands were still unavailable for homesteading pending the creation of a reservation, what was going on in this area in 1908?

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8. In “Thanks to the Hills” what is the goal of the members of the Dry Farming Congress and the Hill brothers, who owned the Great Northern Railway through northeastern Montana?

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9. Who are the “citizens” referred to in the October 29, 1909, article? Who are not citizens?

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10. What event does the brief article from the *Chicago Suburbanite Economist* announce?

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11. **Thought Question:** The *Anaconda Standard* often accused the Chippewa Cree of being “mere trespassers” who were “helping themselves to what they need or like, utterly regardless of the right of property.” How do you think Aufer would respond to a similar critique of white settlers in Valley County? How would Rocky Boy respond? Answer in complete sentences.

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"Good Riddance to Them" (newspaper article), *Anaconda Standard*, July 25, 1909 (page 28).

## GOOD RIDDANCE TO THEM

Washington Bureau of  
The Standard

WASHINGTON, D.C., JULY 21. — Anaconda, Butte and Helena will soon be rid of Rocky Boy and his vagrant band of Indians—perhaps. They will soon be transported to the new reservation established for them in the vicinity of the Fort Peck reservation and the city dumps will know them no more—perhaps. For while a new home has been established for these Montana gypsies, yet there are those among the experts of the Indian service who believe that the settled, comfortable life of a reservation will pall upon these confirmed and chronic wanderers and that before the next year rolls around they will be found again in their old haunts near the garbage dumps and infecting the alleys of the cities in order to eke out a precarious existence. And the fervid protestations of Chief Rocky Boy to the contrary notwithstanding.

At the last session of congress Senator Dixon obtained the passage of an appropriation providing for the establishment of Chief Rocky Boy and his band upon a reservation. At that time they were encamped near a slaughter house at Helena and were almost starving. Piteous appeals were sent to the Indian office and to Senator Dixon for immediate relief, and the appropriation, with the indorsement of the Indian office, was rushed through. Indian Inspectors T.M. Wheat and J.F. Armstrong were sent

to Montana to investigate the situation and arrange for a reservation for the Indians. The sum of \$30,000 was available by the act of congress.

### ORIGIN OF THE CREES.

It was generally understood that Chief Rocky Boy's band of Indians were vagrant Chippewas who many years ago had wandered away and had been lost in the shuffle when the main body of the Chippewas was placed upon reservations. Much sympathy was aroused by picturing them in the public prints as a sort of lost tribe of Israel, who by some hocus pocus of the law had been robbed of their birthright. But the investigations of Messrs. Wheat and Armstrong showed that as a matter of fact Chief Rocky Boy's bunch of redskins was in no sense a Chippewa tribe and that he himself was simply the self-appointed chief of a conglomeration of outcasts and homeless Indians of half a dozen different tribes together with a choice selection of half-breeds. While the French Canadian Chippewa half-breed perhaps make up the bulk of the combination, yet there is a generous sprinkling of Sioux, Cree and several other varieties of the red man. While the bulk of them were attending pink teas in the vicinity of the Helena slaughter house, yet the inspectors discovered that members of the so-called tribe were scattered throughout the state. And in addition to this the inspectors found that there were about 300 vagrant Indians wandering about the

state who had no connection with the Rocky Boy band. These vagabonds have been a great nuisance to the ranchers and cattlemen and their removal to the reservation will be a temporary boon at least. The fact that the Chief Rocky Boy band had no tribal traditions or laws and little organization also showed that they were merely gypsy Indians.

### NO OTHER TRIBE WANTS THEM.

Efforts were at first made by the inspectors to locate the Indians on some of the established reservations. Immediately there was a howl of protest from all the reservations. The Blackfeet would not have them at any price; the Flatheads refused to admit them; the Crows emphatically declared that they wanted no French-Canadian half-breeds, and the Sioux vigorously opposed their admission and the agents of the curious Montana tribes were equally determined to prevent their settling upon any of the lands under their charge. They all declared that the admission of Rocky Boy's band of Indians would demoralize the Indians already well started on the road to civilization. Finally a home for them was found near Culbertson on public land which had been withdrawn from entry, and agents of the bureau of Indian affairs are now at work locating the wanderers upon the new reservation. Whether they will stay there or not is a problem which is perplexing the Indian

office. They are used to a gypsy, wandering, vagrant life and it is very doubtful whether they can be induced to stay on the new reservation when the newness wears off. Old-timers predict that it will be impossible for the government to keep these Indians to a settled life and that the attempt will be as successful as an effort to confine a bunch of coyotes or prairie dogs to a given tract of land. However, time will tell.

Rocky Boy and his Indians tell some wonderful tales of their wanderings. In fact, the story with the years has grown to be almost an Indian Odyssey with pathetic trimmings. The story of origin is very difficult to verify and much of it is supposed to have been the growth of fancy upon a slim basis of fact with a plenitude of embroidery. Probably if the truth were known much of the romance of this particular case would disappear for the government has for many years had similar cases of gypsy and outcast Indians whom other red men would not recognize or permit on their reservations. The South at present time has this annoyance in a number of states and in the West there are also a number of troublesome instances where Indians have in small numbers escaped from the reservations and are leading vagrant, thieving lives, but as fast as possible they are being rounded up and sent back to the reservations.

#### WANDERERS AND VAGABONDS.

During the administration of Jackson, when the Creeks, Cherokees, Choctaws and Chickasaws were removed from North Carolina,

Tennessee and Mississippi to the Indian Territory, there were a considerable number of these tribesmen who, rather than make the exodus, betook themselves to the swamps and the mountains, willing to forego the fleshpots of comparative civilization in exchange for the charm of a hand-to-mouth life of gysying and thievery. Early in the '30s, when it was certain that the Cherokees would be sent to their new home in the West, a band of the Chota Shoals Cherokees wandered off into the wilderness of the Clinch and Powell valleys in East Tennessee. They have lived there ever since, making a precarious living at the expense of their white neighbors by robbing henroosts and stealing horses. Occasionally, white men, murderers and other outlaws, fleeing from justice, have joined this band and have been welcomed into congenial fraternity. In antebellum days the ranks of these vagrant Indians were recruited to some extent by runaway negro slaves. This mixed race of Indians, whites and negroes, is locally known as "Mallungeons." The origin of the word is lost, but it is a local synonym for all that is tricky, shiftless and dishonest. These "Mallungeons" are living today just as they did when the Cherokees departed. Hating regular labor and civilized ways they furnish a sure and constant supply of chaos for the county courts.

North Carolina has a somewhat similar problem in the Croatan Indians of Roanoke island, while in the western part of the state a large body of Cherokees, who, in the 30s, refused to go West and remained in their old haunts, give occasional trouble

and are not desired as neighbors by white men. Mississippi has about 2,000 wandering Choctaws, Alabamas and Chickasaws. While the Indians who made the exodus from the East to Indian Territory have become civilized and Christianized, live in good houses and have fine farms, with their old myths and savage practices practically forgotten, yet the North Carolina Cherokees are today largely savages still in religion and support medicine men. Chief Rocky Boy and his motley band are only a western expression of a familiar and vexatious problem.

A.W.G.



Land Commissioner S. Aufer to Gov. Norris (letter and transcript), July 17, 1908, MHS MC35:316-1, Montana Governors Papers.

Plentywood, Mont. July 17, 1908.  
Hon. Edwin L. Norris,  
Governor of Montana,  
Helena.

Sir: —

The survey of 37 townships in the north eastern part of Valley county is not as yet approved but settlers by the hundreds have come in and are fighting to secure desirable tracts. Three rimro firearms have been used. A woman and a child have been shot.

Nothing is responsible for this chaotic state of affairs but the red-tape methods of U.S. Survey in not opening up these townships for homestead filing.

Between four and five thousand people are waiting for this survey to be approved and there is still trouble brewing in many neighborhoods.

Can the peoples representatives, the Government, do anything for the good of the people?

Very respectfully,  
Sigmund Aufer  
U.S. Comm.

(See next page for a transcribed copy of this letter.)



Montana's Landless Indians and the Assimilation Era of Federal Indian Policy: A Case of Contradictions  
Part 2—Analysis Activity D-1

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(Copy)

Plentywood, Montana, July 17, 1908.

Hon. Edwin L. Norris,  
Governor of Montana,  
Helena, Montana.



Sir:

The survey of 37 townships in the northeastern part of Valley county is not yet approved, but settlers by the hundreds have come in and are fighting to secure desirable tracts. Three times firearms have been used. A woman and a child have been shot.

Nothing is responsible for this chaotic state of affairs but the red-tape methods of U. S. Survey in not opening up these townships for homestead filing.

Between four and five thousand people are waiting for this survey to be approved, and there is still trouble brewing in many neighborhoods.

Can the people's representatives, the Government, do anything for the good of the people?

Very respectfully,

(Signed) SIGURD AUKER,  
U. S. Commissioner.

### **"THANKS TO THE HILLS"**

A resolution tending the thanks of the convention to James J. and Louis W. Hill for their interest and timely assistance in making the meeting a success was introduced, as was one regarding the matter of placing Chief Rocky Boy's band of renegade Cree Indians on 1,000,000 acres of the public domain in Montana. The latter resolution will be forwarded to the president, commissioner of Indian affairs and secretary of the Interior, with the request that the proposition be looked into more thoroughly, with the hope that this action may be reconsidered and the land be given over to settlement by citizens.

### **"Thanks to the Hills"**

*(Excerpted from "Spokane Choices of Convention," a larger report on the annual meeting of the Dry Farming Congress, a national agricultural organization.)*

*Anaconda Standard, October 29, 1909 (page 14)*

## **ROCKY BOY INDIAN LANDS OPEN FOR SETTLEMENT.**

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Secretary Ballinger has issued instructions to throw open 1,400,000 acres of land in Eastern Montana to white settlers.

This land was withdrawn about two years ago for the purpose of allotting to the Rocky Boy Indians. The tract contains the very choicest lands in Valley County and wherever farming has been carried on, it has produced yields of from 20 to 30 bushels of wheat per acre, 40 to 70 bushels of oats and large crops of hay, alfalfa and vegetables.

There are over 8,000 160-acre homesteads in this tract, which is considerable more than the combined total in the Flathead, Spokane and Coeur d'Alene Reservations, which were opened to settlement last summer.

“Rocky Boy Indian Lands Open for Settlement”

*Chicago Suburbanite Economist*

Chicago, Illinois

February 18, 1910 (page 7)



**Montana's Landless Indians and the Assimilation Era of Federal Indian Policy: A Case of Contradictions**  
**Part 2—Analysis Activity D-1**

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Andrew Valler, a Half-breed Cree, and His Kootenai Wife and Children.  
(Notice the cradleboard, not common among the Cree—who carried their babies in a moss bag—with Cree-style beadwork.)  
Flathead Reservation. Photo by Frank B. Linderman.  
[Used with permission from the Archives of the Mansfield Library  
at University of Montana. Photo reference #007-VIII-197.]

Many landless Cree, Métis, and Chippewa settled on existing reservations. The Flathead, Blackfeet, and Fort Belknap Reservations had a number of Cree, Chippewa, and Métis living there, and a large community of Cree also lived on and off for decades on the Crow Reservation. Intertribal marriage was common.

In 1904, Senator Gibson introduced S. 2705, a bill to create allotments on the Flathead Reservation for “such members, including men, women and children of the migratory band of Indians...known as Rocky Boy’s band, as shall, upon investigation, be satisfactorily shown to have been born in the United States and who may desire to settle permanently...” The bill would have provided appropriations to pay the Indians on the Flathead for these lands and pay for building houses for the members of Rocky Boy’s band. The bill passed the Senate in January 1905, but failed to pass the House. Not long afterward, over strong tribal objection, the Flathead Reservation was opened for homesteading, and within days hundreds of white farmers had filed for homesteads.

Montana's Landless Indians and the Assimilation Era of Federal Indian Policy: A Case of Contradictions  
**Part 2—Analysis Activity D-1**

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These quilled moccasins demonstrate a blending of styles, materials, and techniques from different tribes. While the quill design appears to be “Flathead,” the style of moccasin is more typical of the Cree, as is the hard rawhide sole. This pair is from 1880. Many well-to-do white Montanans collected Indian artifacts, clothing, and cultural items throughout the nineteenth century and into the twentieth century, sometimes acquiring such items as gifts, other times purchasing them for fair prices, and not infrequently buying them at rock-bottom prices when the sellers were destitute and needed money for necessities such as food.

[MHS artifact x1900.03.11 moccasins. 1880 buckskin, quills, cotton.  
Montana Historical Society Mary Ronan Indian Collection.]

# Montana's Landless Indians and the Assimilation Era of Federal Indian Policy: A Case of Contradictions



## Part 2—Analysis Activity D—2: A Reservation is Created

### D-2 Worksheet

#### DOCUMENTS AND IMAGES:

- “Rocky Boy and His Band at Last to Have a Home” (newspaper article), *Great Falls Tribune*, June 14, 1910 (page 1).
- “Chippewas Abandon Reservation Again” (newspaper article) *Anaconda Standard*, December 14, 1910 (page 1).
- “Rocky Boy Band to be Guests of the Government” (newspaper article), *Anaconda Standard*, November 24, 1912 (page 10).

#### HISTORICAL CONTEXT:

In 1910 the federal government promised land allotments on the Blackfeet Reservation to members of Rocky Boy’s band and to some of his allies. The allotments did not come quickly,

however, and many families faced starvation while waiting for rations. After the failure of the proposed Valley County reservation (see D-1), some landless Indians such as Little Bear refused to wait for the government to uphold its end of the negotiation. Others, such as Rocky Boy, continued to work with the government in the hopes that a settlement could be reached.

At the same time these allotments were offered, the federal government was also offering land to non-Indian settlers under the Homestead Act. In 1909, the Enlarged Homestead Act increased the amount of land homesteaders could claim in some areas of Montana from 160 acres to 320 acres, recognizing that 160 acres was too small an area to support a family in the arid West.

#### QUESTIONS:

**Questions, unless otherwise noted, do not need to be answered in complete sentences.**

1. Between 1892 and 1910, several sources estimated the landless Indian population in Montana to be at least 2,000 people—mainly Cree, Chippewa, and Métis—separated into groups of 75 to 200 (in general). What percentage of this total number is “125”? What is the significance of your answer?

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2. Between the time when the Valley County reservation site was revoked and the allotments made on the Blackfeet Reservation, where did Rocky Boy’s band live, and how did they survive?

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3. What action did Rocky Boy take to try to help his people?

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4. The first article states that these allotments are “a victory” and a “reward” that will “bring joy and gladness to the hearts of Rocky Boy and his followers.” How are these statements contradicted by the information provided in “Chippewas Abandon Reservation Again” and “Rocky Boy Band to Be Guests of the Government”? Be specific.

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5. Describe the allotments on the Blackfeet Reservation. How many acres was each allotment? What was the quality of the land?

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6. Compare the allotments on the Blackfeet Reservation to those on the proposed Valley County reservation. (See “Rocky Boy Indian Lands Open for Settlement” in D-1.)

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7. List two reasons that Penneto and his followers and Little Bear and his followers left the Blackfeet Reservation in 1910. Where did they go?

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**8. Thought Questions:** When did Rocky Boy and his band leave the Blackfeet Reservation? Where did they go? Why did they stay on the reservation longer than many of the Chippewa Cree? Answer in complete sentences.

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"Rocky Boy and His Band at Last to Have a Home" (newspaper article)  
*Great Falls Tribune*, June 17, 1910 (page 1).

## **ROCKY BOY AND HIS BAND AT LAST TO HAVE A HOME**

### **U.S. Indian Department Announces an Allotment of 80 Acres on Blackfeet Reservation to Each Member of Band—Victory After 20 Years Hardship**

**F**ollowing a struggle of 20 years for recognition from the United States government, the trials and tribulations of Rocky Boy and the 125 members of his band are at an end, and a permanent home is finally to be the reward of the years of suffering experienced by the members of this outcast band of Indians.

The announcement that will bring joy and gladness to the hearts of Rocky Boy and his faithful followers was received in Great Falls yesterday by John F. Armstrong, United States allotting agent of the Indian service of the department of the interior, from department officials at the national capitol. According to the arrangement as given out, Rocky Boy and each member of his band is to receive an allotment of 80 acres, twenty miles north of the Blackfeet agency, on the reservation at the forks of the St. Mary and Milk rivers. They are to be under the supervision of Superintendent Churchill of the Blackfeet Indian reservation.

Overlooked and forgotten when the Chippewa tribe was assigned to its reservations in Wisconsin, nearly a score of years ago, Rocky Boy and his original band of 100 Redmen have since been tramps upon the face of the earth, at times facing starvation. In fact, it is alleged that in the winter of 1908 some members of the band actually perished for want of food. After leaving Wisconsin and Minnesota, this band of Indians spent some time on the Turtle Mountain reservation in North Dakota. Their presence, it seems, was not desired there, and they were driven on the tramp again, and headed for Montana. During the term of former United States Senator Gibson he endeavored to have justice done these Redmen, but in vain.

Later, a million acres of land which previous administration had set aside for Rocky Boy and his band was instead not given to them but restored to the public domain by Secretary Ballinger, in 1909, in

response to a petition signed by President L.W. Hill of the Great Northern railroad, Senator Clapp of Minnesota, chairman of the committee on Indian affairs in the Senate, and a large number of citizens of Northern Montana.

Last winter Rocky Boy and his band were chased hither and thither over the state. At one time they came to Great Falls, and public-spirited citizens provided means for the purchase of rations for their subsistence. Rocky Boy went to Helena, where he appealed to former Judge Hunt. Judge Hunt rendered the Indian aid so far as he was able, and called the attention of the department at Washington to the condition of the half-starved band of Indians. The department responded by providing a small sum of money for rations.

Of late, Rocky Boy and his band have resided on the Blackfeet reservation, but have had no allotments of their own.



"Chippewas Abandon Reservation Again" (newspaper article),  
*Anaconda Standard*, December 14, 1910 (page 1).

## CHIPPEWAS ABANDON RESERVATION AGAIN

SAY GOVERNMENT HAS NOT  
KEPT  
PROMISE TO PROVIDE LAND  
AND FOOD.

LITTLE BEAR'S CREE BAND  
ALSO PACKS ITS TEPPES

Special Dispatch to the Standard.

Helena, Dec. 13.—Claiming that the people of Helena are more generous to them than is the government, about 150 members of Rocky Boy's band of Chippewa Indians left the Blackfeet Indian reservation in Northwestern Montana and are now encamped near Helena. Rocky Boy and about 50 of his most devoted followers remained on the reservation, preferring to take their chances of starvation rather than to depend on the charity of outsiders. The insurgent band is under the leadership of Penneto, who claimed to be a brother of Rocky Boy.

When the majority of the Chippewas pulled out their old-time companions in misery, Little Bear's band of Crees, who had been encamped near them, also pulled out and are now wintering near Havre.

The past summer a few were allotted lands on the Blackfeet reservation, Rocky Boy among the number. The rolls showed that 220 were entitled to allotments, and it is understood that the government intended to give the remainder of the tribesmen their lands next spring.

Along in September the Indians became restive. They had been promised rations that did not come. There were delays of one kind and another. Suddenly, one day after a powwow, about 150 of the Chippewas rounded up their ponies, took down their tents, stowed the plunder on wagons and trekked from the reservation.

They claimed the government had failed to keep its promises, that land had been promised and it had not been given, that rations had been promised and they had not been received. Richard Sanderville, government farmer of the Blackfeet Indian reservation, who is here as a witness before the federal grand jury, has encountered some of the Chippewas and has endeavored to induce them to return. But they refused to listen to him. Mr. Sanderville says the rations will be forthcoming if the Indians return, that authorization was secured from the Indian department to purchase the rations, but that there was a little delay, the Chippewas become angry and pulled out.

## ROCKY BOY BAND TO BE GUESTS OF GOVERNMENT

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Special Dispatch to the Standard.

Helena, Nov. 23.—Rocky Boy's band of Cree Indians, whose plight was recently called to the attention of the Indian department at Washington, will spend the winter, not in the bleak fastness of the Blackfeet Indian reservation, but as guests of the war department on the old Head ranch. Here they will be furnished rations from Fort Harrison, the department of the interior reimbursing the war department.

Maj. A.E. McFatridge, agent in charge of the Blackfeet reservation, is in the city and today made arrangements for the band to remain here. It numbers 62 persons at present, although Major McFatridge is of the opinion there are 700 homeless Indians in Montana, divided into small bands, which are eking out an existence in camps near the large cities.

Major McFatridge said he will recommend to the department, as he has recommended in the past, that the band be given allotments on land in which crops can be grown.

"The Crees are not bad fellows," said Major McFatridge. "The younger members are anxious and willing to work. They do not like to dependent upon government charity, nor do they wish to lead a nomadic life, but the land allotted to them on the Blackfeet reservation is not adapted to their needs and that they refuse to remain there is not to be wondered at. It is grazing, not farming, land that was given them. They have no stock to speak of."

# Montana's Landless Indians and the Assimilation Era of Federal Indian Policy: A Case of Contradictions



## Art 2—Analysis Activity D—3: A Reservation is Created

### D-3 Worksheet

#### DOCUMENTS AND IMAGES:

- “Little Bear Is Poor But He Is Also Proud” (newspaper article), *Anaconda Standard*, November 15, 1905 (page 13).
- Little Bear, 1895 (photograph), “Presented by Taylor the photographer,” MHS Pac 955-679.
- “A Rocky Outfit” (newspaper editorial), *Anaconda Standard*, December 12, 1911 (page 6).
- “Rocky Boy in Ill Fortune” (newspaper article), *Great Falls Daily Tribune*, January 6, 1912 (page 6).

#### HISTORICAL CONTEXT:

Newspapers continued to shape public opinion about the landless Indians. While the *Anaconda Standard* continued to print negative stories about Rocky Boy and other groups, other papers printed more favorable stories. The editor of the *Great Falls Daily Tribune*, William M. Bole, traveled to Washington to speak on behalf of Rocky Boy and used the pages of his paper to promote sympathy among its readers.

#### QUESTIONS:

**Questions, unless otherwise noted, do not need to be answered in complete sentences.**

1. According to “Little Bear Is Poor But He Is Also Proud ...”, what does Little Bear want from the Canadian government if he and his band return? (List five things.)

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2. Where will Little Bear’s band live in the 1905-06 winter, and how will they survive?

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3. What negative stereotypes does “A Rocky Outfit” use to describe Rocky Boy’s band? (List the terms used in the article.)
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
4. Why does the editor refer to Rocky Boy’s band as “Crees”? (You may need to refer to the historical context in order to answer this question.)
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
5. “A Rocky Outfit” states that Rocky Boy’s band “Left a good home provided for it on the Blackfoot Reservation.” Use evidence from the articles in D-2 to test the accuracy of this statement.
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
6. What do Rocky Boy’s actions in “Rocky Boy in Ill Fortune” reveal about his respect for persons of authority and private property?
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
7. How much time passed between the publication of “A Rocky Outfit” and “Rocky Boy in Ill Fortune?”
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

8. How are these details about Rocky Boy’s character different from the representation of him in the *Anaconda Standard* article?

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9. **Thought Question:** Why do you think that “A Rocky Outfit” and “Rocky Boy in Ill Fortune,” express such different perspectives on the situation? Answer in complete sentences.

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*Anaconda Standard*, November 15, 1905 (page 13)

# LITTLE BEAR IS POOR BUT HE IS ALSO PROUD

HE DICTATES TERMS TO THE  
CANADIAN GOVERNMENT.

HE ISSUES AN ULTIMATUM

Counties of Northern Montana must  
support him and his ragged fol-  
lowers if they stay on this side.  
Consults a lawyer.

Special Dispatch to the Standard.

Great Falls, Nov. 18.—Though poor, Little Bear, chief of the Cree Indians in Montana, is proud, and he will not accept favors from the Canadian government until he shall have been granted what he considers his rights. Though the Dominion officials promised to pardon the crimes committed by the Crees in the Riel rebellion and give them a home on a reservation if they would return to the land from which they have been exiles for 20 years, Little Bear and nearly all his tribe have decided not to go unless given the rights guaranteed to them by a treaty made many years ago.

Little Bear had refused to have any further dealings with the Canadian commissioner of Indian affairs, saying he lost faith in such officials many years ago, and he has presented his demands directly to the Canadian minister of the interior.

## What He Demands.

He demands that the full-bloods among his followers be allotted lands from which they can earn a livelihood, in a country where there are fishing and

hunting; that he and all his people be paid annuities due them when they fled from Canada and for the intervening years; that all conditions of the treaties between the Canadian government and the Crees be fulfilled; that the Indians be allowed rations for a specified period after their return; that he and his family and the mixed bloods among his followers be granted script, negotiable, with which public land may be appropriated, to the amount of 160 acres for each adult and 40 acres for each minor.

If these concessions should be made, says Little Bear, he and 727 of his people will leave Montana when the first grass comes next spring and will forever remain in Canada. A few of his tribe have already accepted the offer made several weeks ago and have crossed the line, going to the Onion Lake reservation; but Little Bear declares he will never go to that reservation, and that 727 of his will obey him implicitly.

## Must Be Supported.

Little Bear and his people in Northern Montana are in desperate straits, and never before since they fled from Canada have they been poverty stricken to such an extent. But he has been consulting lawyers and has learned something of the laws, and he declares that he and his people will force the counties of Northern Montana to support them through the coming winter. They will not take to the hills, as in former winters, when they had some money, says Little Bear, but they will stay in the towns and starve unless the people feed them.



Montana's Landless Indians and the Assimilation Era of Federal Indian Policy: A Case of Contradictions  
**Part 2—Analysis Activity D-3**

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Little Bear, 1895. [MHS PAc 955-679. Text on back of photo: "Presented by Taylor the photographer".]

“A Rocky Outfit” (newspaper editorial), *Anaconda Standard*, December 12, 1911 (page 6).

## A ROCKY OUTFIT

**R**ocky Boy and his band of tramp Indians seem to fare about as well as do a great many of deserving white men, who have no call for assistance from the federal government. This bunch of decrepit Crees and marauding bucks, outcast from a dozen tribes, have come in for a lot of sympathy in the Canadian territory north of here. Rocky Boy is not a full-blood Indian—he's a breed. He does not want to work. He hung around Butte and Anaconda after a season at Helena. Nobody hears of him and his followers during the warm months—it is only in the cold weather that old Rocky comes to the front page in the newspaper. Then he is hungry, his squaws and satellites are hungry.

The good public notifies  
Washington and the federal

government hastens to bring the band in from the cold.

This bunch of mangy nomads left a good home provided for it in the Blackfeet reservation—pickings there were not as good as they are on the city dumps at Helena and Butte.

Late word from Washington is that the agent at Blackfoot is instructed to corral the renegades and shoo them back to warm tepees on the reservation.

Unlike the Utes, the Rocky Boys have no grievance against anybody—they are merely barnacles: they are lazy, indolent and shiftless. They do not deserve as much sympathy as do the white men who today are humbling themselves by begging for employment.



“Rocky Boy in Ill Fortune” (newspaper article), *Great Falls Tribune*,  
January 6, 1912 (page 6).

## ROCKY BOY IN ILL FORTUNE

### Well Known Indian Writes Note to Postmaster Cooney and Recalls Former Visit Here

**R**ocky Boy, long one of the well known Indian characters of this part of Montana, is once more on the rocks of ill luck. He is now at Browning and, according to his own version, in need of some clothing supplies for the members of his band. At least that is what he writes to Postmaster E. H. Cooney. He is going to get some supplies, for Postmaster Cooney has befriended the Indian leader before and he is going to do so once more.

The news that Rocky Boy was in ill luck, which Postmaster Cooney received yesterday in a personal letter, recalled an amusing incident in which Rocky Boy and Postmaster Cooney happened to be the chief figures about 10 years ago. The Indian with his band were staying around Great Falls for a time and some cattle, owned by a man who had them running the range on the west side of the river, had died. The carcasses had not been skinned. Rocky Boy wanted to skin them for the hides. He went to Mr. Cooney and asked if it would not be possible to get the permission, making the inquiry through his interpreter as he did not then, and does not now, talk the English language. Mr. Cooney, thinking no one would ever object and that it would give Rocky Boy the privilege he wanted and damage no one, wrote out a long document with plenty of seals and gave it to the Indian, there being a grant for him to skin the dead cattle.

Rocky Boy took off some of the hides and one afternoon while a number of

people were about the New Park hotel a man who was engaged as a sort of foreman for the owner of the cattle attacked Rocky Boy and accused him of having killed his cattle. He struck the Indian a time or two and while the struggle was getting well started Mr. Cooney appeared on the scene. Rocky Boy scrambled away from his assailant and grabbing the long piece of paper containing the permit which Mr. Cooney had given him, Rocky Boy ran towards his friend.

Mr. Cooney saw he was face to face with trouble and he told the man who attacked the Indian to get out, and that he never owned a cow in his life, and that the Indian had done nothing wrong. The crowd was with Cooney and the Indian and the man who made the attack got off the scene. Following the incident, Mr. Cooney gave the Indian one of his personal cards. Yesterday that card came back to him in the letter written by Rocky Boy asking aid. The card was put into the letter and this reference made to it: “Now there is your card, when you gave me you told me to call on you.”

The Indian told Postmaster Cooney his band needed clothing and blankets and said they now have but one blanket each. Postmaster Cooney will send the chief some clothing in a few days.



# Montana's Landless Indians and the Assimilation Era of Federal Indian Policy: A Case of Contradictions



## Part 2—Analysis Activity D—4: A Reservation Is Created

### D-4 Worksheet

#### DOCUMENTS AND IMAGES:

- Rocky Boy by Joe Scheuerle (painting), (back, transcript), 1912, Blackfeet Res., MT, MHS L2008.03.07 (lent by the family of Joe Scheuerle).
- Charlie Russell and Friends, 1913 (photograph), July 4, 1913, Polson, MT, MHS PAc 2000-40.6.
- Chief Kenewash by Fritz Studio (photograph), undated, no location listed, MHS PAc 954-937.
- Denny family by Lucke (photograph), circa 1917, near Havre, MT, MHS PAc 955-701 Al Lucke Collection.
- William Denny Sr. Oral History (excerpt), 1983, OH 543 William Denny Sr. interview, part of the Métis Cultural Recovery oral history collection, MHS.

#### EPILOGUE:

Rocky Boy's band of Chippewa and Little Bear's Cree band were granted a small reservation on government lands near Fort Assiniboine in 1916, after much negotiation and against significant resistance. Many of the landless Indians, Chippewa and Cree alike, were excluded from the rolls at this new reservation. Likewise, many Métis were not included. Since that time, these families have continued living in communities throughout Montana, often experiencing social persecution as Indians or mixed-bloods without a reservation. To this day, the Little Shell Chippewa, many of whom are Métis, are not recognized by the federal government, although they have actively sought recognition for over a century. The Little Shell are recognized by the State of Montana.

Rocky Boy died shortly before President Woodrow Wilson signed the executive order authorizing the reservation he and his fellow landless Indians had spent three decades working so hard to obtain. The Rocky Boy Reservation is the smallest reservation in Montana.

#### QUESTIONS:

**Questions, unless otherwise noted, do not need to be answered in complete sentences.**

1. Where and when was William Denny born?

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2. At the time of his birth, where did his father, James Denny, work?

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3. Where else did the Denny family live before the families moved to the Rocky Boy Reservation?

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4. What did the Cree and Chippewa families who became enrolled do once they arrived on the reservation? List four things.

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5. Contrast these actions with earlier allegations made by entities such as the *Anaconda Standard* in articles such as “Good Riddance to Them” (D-1, page 104) and “A Rocky Outfit” (D-3, page 123).

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6. Whom does Denny acknowledge for the establishment of the reservation? What reasons does he mention for them having worked so hard to have a reservation (other than physical survival)?

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7. List three non-Indian allies who supported Rocky Boy and Little Bear in their quest for a reservation.

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8. Analyze the photographs of Chief Kenewash and the Denny family. Describe these individuals using specific photographic evidence.

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9. **Thought Question:** The Chippewa and Cree were in Montana as early as the 1870s but did not receive a reservation until 1916 (while members of the Little Shell never gained a reservation). Why do you think it took over forty years to establish Rocky Boy Reservation? Answer in complete sentences.

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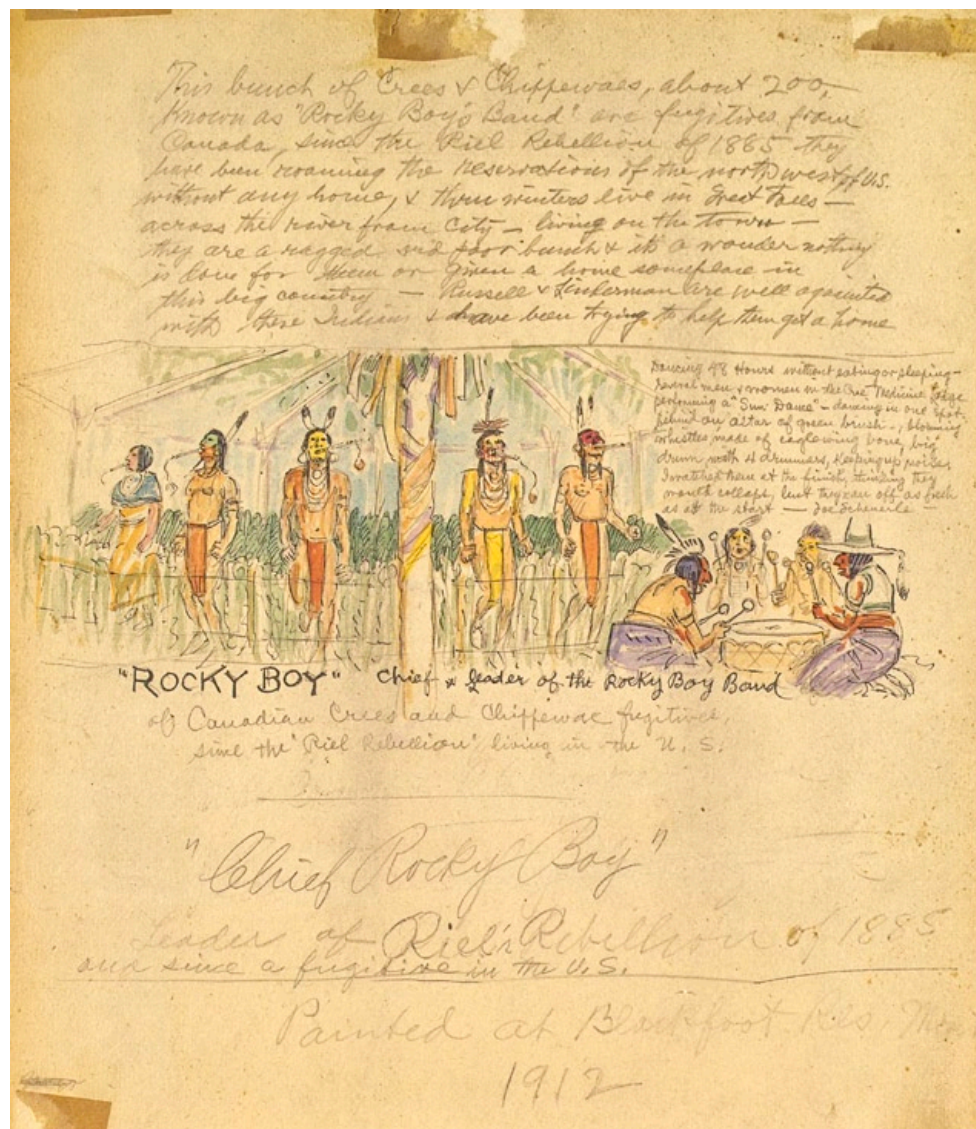
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Montana's Landless Indians and the Assimilation Era of Federal Indian Policy: A Case of Contradictions  
**Part 2—Analysis Activity D-4**



"ROCKY BOY" chief and leader of the Rocky Boy Band of Canadian Crees and Chippewas, fugitives since the "Riel Rebellion" living in the U.S. "Chief Rocky Boy" Leader of the Riel Rebellion of 1885 and since a fugitive in the U.S. Painted at Blackfoot Res, Mont 1912. [MHS artifact L2008.03.07.  
 Lent by Joe Scheuerle's grandson Bill Grierson and wife Pat.]

Text from the back of Scheuerle's Rocky Boy, 1912. The front of the painting can be seen on page 15 of the Historical Context. Blackfeet Reservation, Montana:

This bunch of Crees & Chippewas, about 200, known as the "Rocky Boy's Band," are fugitives from Canada. Since the Riel Rebellion of 1885 they have been roaming the reservations of the northwest of U.S. without any home, 4 thru winters live in Great Falls—across the river from city—living on the towns—they are a ragged and poor bunch & it's a wonder nothing is done for them or given a home some place in this big country—Russell and Linderman are well acquainted with these Indians & have been trying to help them get a home. Dancing 48 hours without eating or sleeping—several men & women in the Cree Medicine Lodge performing a "Sun Dance"—dancing in one spot behind an altar of green brush—blowing whistles made of eagle wing bone, big drum, with 4 drummers, keeping up noise. I watched them at the finish, thinking they would collapse, but they ran off fresh as at the start—Joe Scheuerle

Montana's Landless Indians and the Assimilation Era of Federal Indian Policy: A Case of Contradictions  
**Part 2—Analysis Activity D-4**

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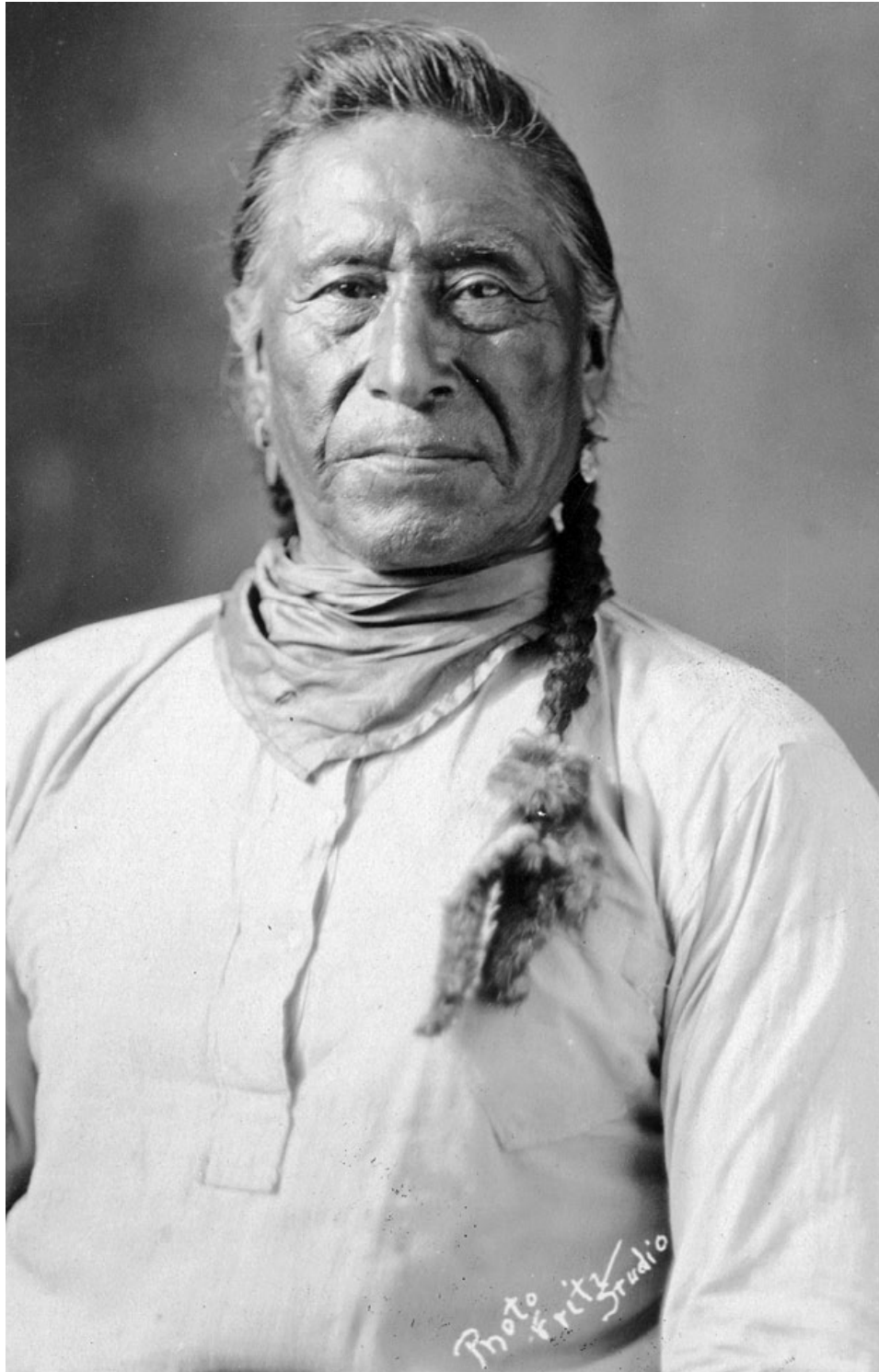
Charlie Russell and Friends. Polson, Montana. July 4, 1913.  
From left to right: Mrs. Scheuerle, William Krieghoff, Charlie Russell, Joe Scheuerle, unidentified, Hop. [MHS Photo Archives Collection 2000-40.16. Photo by Thiri's Aerial View Service.]

When Joe Scheurle and T. E. Ronne painted Little Bear and Rocky Boy's portraits (see Historical Context pages 14 and 15), the two leaders had been working together for years to secure a shared reservation. They were supported in their efforts by people like writer/legislator Frank Bird Linderman, artist Charlie Russell, and William Bole, the editor of the *Great Falls Tribune*. Charlie Russell invited other artists—such as Joseph Scheuerle and William Krieghoff—to visit him and have a chance to paint Little Bear and Rocky Boy.



Montana's Landless Indians and the Assimilation Era of Federal Indian Policy: A Case of Contradictions  
**Part 2—Analysis Activity D-4**

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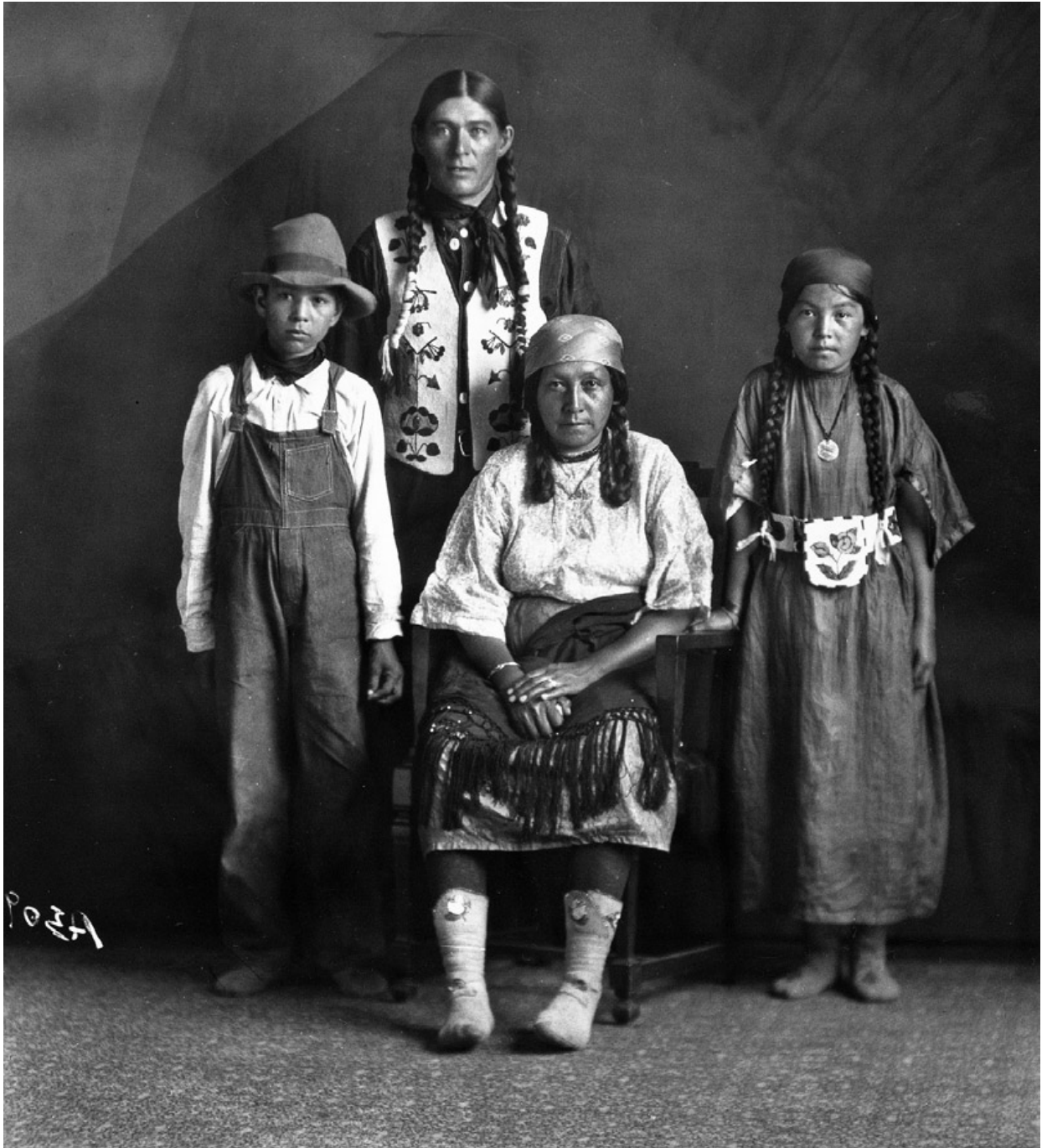
Chief Kenewash. Photo by Fritz Studio. Year and location unknown.  
[MHS Photo Archives Collection 954-937]

Kenewash was a Cree elder who helped establish the reservation. He was among the tribal representatives who met in Helena with state and federal officials to negotiate for the reservation at the site of Fort Assinniboine.



Montana's Landless Indians and the Assimilation Era of Federal Indian Policy: A Case of Contradictions  
**Part 2—Analysis Activity D-4**

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Denny Family. [MHS PAc 955-702, Photo by Al Lucke, taken near Havre, MT. Cropped.]

William Denny is the young boy. His parents are James and Maggie Denny, a daughter of Little Bear. His sister is Florence Denny.

James and his sister, Mary Denny, were listed as Canadian Crees affiliated with Rocky Boy's band on Wheat's 1909 census, with their surname spelled Dinnie.

This photo would have been taken about 1917 or so, after the family moved to the newly created Rocky Boy Reservation.

Montana's Landless Indians and the Assimilation Era of Federal Indian Policy: A Case of Contradictions  
**Part 2—Analysis Activity D-4**

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**WILLIAM DENNY (Sr.) ORAL HISTORY** (excerpts from transcript pgs 1 and 3) March 14, 1983.  
[MHS OH 543, William Denny Sr., March 14, 1983. Part of the Métis Cultural Recovery collection.]

My name is William Denny, Sr.

I was born October 15, 1910 at Helena, Montana.

At that time we lived there, at Helena, Montana, my father, James Denny, worked for the Great Northern railway for I don't know how many years. From there we moved to Great Falls and stayed there a few year also. During this time this land was being given to the Crees. As for me, my aunt, my fathers sister, Mary Denny, took me to the Crow reservation where we stayed for a year, where people arrived from all over to prepare to move here.

Next I remember we arrived here what people call "when people wintered down below", the white man called the Rocky Boy camp. I recall our arrival here to this camp. That spring the camp was moved to what was called later, Sangrey School, next move the camp made was to this location what is now the agency.

The people started building houses, mostly one room log houses where people lived. Whenever one was going to build a house, at that time, several wagons were taken up to the mountains, men cutting logs. When logs were brought down, everyone pitched in to help build this one home, sometimes have the house ready for occupancy within 3 or 4 days time. Everyone helping, women, just everyone, all the people. At that time, everyone helped one another whatever needed to be done.

At this location we continued to live before the land assignments. When the people started getting land assignments, Little Bear picked his land by which John G. Meyers has now. At this time too, people gathered to fence of his assignment. Here I remember I helped Little Bear build this fence.

As for the camps, they were moved from place to place during the summer, to where it was cleaner. Winter time people moved back to the home base so to speak, where school was going to start, where the children wouldn't have far to go. People lived at this location for several years. As for me I did not start school right away as my father did not allow me to go until at the age of 10 I went as far as the 7th grade and did not go any further. At that time when I was a child, my chore was getting firewood for home, also hauling water. There was swampy area where everyone got their water supply, below where the Senior Center is now. There weren't any wells in those days.

At that time everyone was around this area, agency. There were two camps, the BIA campus area where we lived, our next move is where this tribal building is now.

In my childhood, we had games, all kinds of games, we did not have what you call a youth center, what we had were Indian games. Winter games were sliding, the children were altogether they did not separate to go get into mischief at that time, another was what we called spinner, a top, we use these on ice. Summer we played with bow & arrow. There's all kinds of Indian games which no longer exist today.

When people first moved here they helped one another on everything, whatever needed doing, building homes, etc. When it was time to plant, about 4 or 5 young men would cultivate the fields, using walking plows breaking ground. When finished they would move on to the next assignment. Community help on everything, haying time or what ever, fall time during harvest, the same thing. They would all gather at the particular place, whoever needed help, no one expecting any wages. They believed in their Indian belief, to help one another not to just stand and watch. When one was doing something be available to help. This was their belief in those days.

When children first started school at what is called Rocky Boy's Agency there was only one school. In wintertime the people would return from their land assignments. where they had already started their homes, had



Montana's Landless Indians and the Assimilation Era of Federal Indian Policy: A Case of Contradictions  
Part 2—Analysis Activity D-4

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(This excerpt is from page 3 of William Denny Sr. oral history, March 14, 1983. MHS OH 543.)

Now I'm going to talk about something else. This land we have ah-si-ni-wah-chis Rocky Mountains, the people know it by or Bear Paw, Mahs ko-chi-chik. Before they ever moved here, our people traveled all over the state of Montana working for wheat farmers, ranchers, fencing and haying for them. Some of them picked up English. Then they started to look for land to call home. There were a few people who could speak and understand English, not fluently tho, just enough to make themselves understood what they wanted. Why we have this reservation, it was our elders who made it possible for us, they picked this place for themselves and for the future generations where they can be content and retain their way of life culturally and their religion. This is the reason why they chose this place, where we are now. I don't think it is written anywhere the reason they chose this land. They had other choices where to have a reservation but they knew this country before the whiteman came. They traveled all over up to the pi-kah-no-wi-si-piy Missouri River, un north before there was a border back and forth. Finally they had the Canadian border, the Indians didn't know this, that the U.S. and Canada made the border. Crees were gathered, they were called Canadian Crees, they got deported into Canada twice and each time they would return. Some stayed over there and their families are still there today. That's why they know this country so well. They had names for all these mountains. All what I have talked about happened before my time but my father has told me these stories and other old men use to talk about this, why they wanted this land and who it was that worked so hard to get this land we have now. These stories I have heard, it is not written, from the Cree old men and I believe them.



# Montana's Landless Indians and the Assimilation Era of Federal Indian Policy: A Case of Contradictions



## Part 2 – Summary Activity

### D: A Reservation Is Created

Using all of the documents and questions in Section D, write at least four paragraphs answering the following questions. Present your answers to the class.

#### Summary of Understanding:

- Describe the proposed reservation in Valley County and why it did not become a reality.
- Describe the land offered on the Blackfeet Reservation. Why did that attempt to secure land for the Chippewa Cree fail?
- Describe actions Little Bear and Rocky Boy took to help their people survive?
- Where and when was a reservation established? Use William Denny's oral history to describe early reservation life.

# Montana's Landless Indians and the Assimilation Era of Federal Indian Policy: A Case of Contradictions



## Credits for Images and Documents

All of the photographs, archival object images, and historical documents used in this lesson are, unless otherwise stated, from the Montana Historical Society Research Center and Museum, Helena, Montana. The oral histories included here are transcripts from the Montana Historical Society.

Two of the images, Horse and Travois and Andrew Valler are courtesy the Archives and the University of Montana's Mansfield Library and are referenced as such.

The C.M. Russell Museum in Great Falls generously provided the use of the image of *Mothers Under the Skin* by Charlie Russell. Full reference is included in the text.

The photograph *Indians Near Butte* is used courtesy the Historic Photo Archives of Portland, Oregon. Full reference is cited in the text.

The photograph of the Latrays, Lefferts, Charettes, and Rasors is courtesy Métis Cousins.

The Hearst Library kindly provided access to original editions of the *Anaconda Standard* so that the newspaper articles for this project could be digitally photographed. Thank you, John Finn. The Montana Historical Society transcribed and reset many of the newspaper articles to enhance readability. Otherwise, none of the contents of these articles has been altered or omitted, except where noted.

# Montana's Landless Indians and the Assimilation Era of Federal Indian Policy: A Case of Contradictions



## Additional Resources

### PRINT:

Cajune, Julie. *Montana Tribal Histories: Educators Resource Guide and Companion DVD*. Helena, MT: Montana Office of Public Instruction. Rev. 2013. Sent by the OPI to all school libraries. Available online: <http://opi.mt.gov/Programs/IndianEd/curricsearch.html>. (Hint: Filter subject area of table to Cross-Curriculum and scroll to title.)

Dusenberry, Verne. *The Montana Cree: A Study in Religious Persistence*. Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1998. Chapter One, "Historical Background," pages 28-46. (The chapter material is the same in the 1962 edition, though page numbers may be different.) This book is available online through Google Books: <http://books.google.com/>, possibly found in public, school, or university libraries and can be interlibrary loaned. Used copies are available on the Internet.

Hogue, Michel. "Disputing the Medicine Line: The Plains Crees and the Canadian-American Border, 1876-1885." *Montana The Magazine of Western History*, 52 (Winter 2002), 2-17. Available online at: [http://www.visitmt.com/history/Montana the Magazine of Western History/Winter02/medicineline.htm](http://www.visitmt.com/history/Montana%20the%20Magazine%20of%20Western%20History/Winter02/medicineline.htm)

Holmes, Krys. *Montana: Stories of the Land*. Helena, MT: Montana Historical Society Press, 2008. Chapters 8-15. Also available online from the MHS website: <http://svcalt.mt.gov/education/Textbook/TextbookMainPage.asp>.

*Montana The Magazine of Western History* is published by the Montana Historical Society and is available at most high school libraries in the state. Back issues may also be ordered from the Montana Historical Society. It is an excellent history journal, and there is an online searchable index on the Montana Historical Society website: <http://www.mhs.mt.gov/>.

Vrooman, Nicholas C. P. "*The Whole Country was ... 'One Robe'*": *The Little Shell Tribe's America*. Little Shell Tribe of Chippewa Indians of Montana and Drumlummon Institute. 2012. Sent by the Montana Office of Public Instruction to all school libraries.

### WEBSITES:

C-Span Cities Tour – Helena: Nicholas Vrooman, "The Whole Country Was ... 'One Robe'." To access, go to [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com) and search "Nicholas Vrooman Helena."

Chippewa Cree Tribe of Rocky Boy Montana: <http://www.chippewacree.org>

Gabriel Dumont Institute: <https://gdins.org> (See also Virtual Museum link below.)

Governor's Office of Indian Affairs, state of Montana: <http://tribalnations.mt.gov> (Links to all Montana tribes and reservations.)

Library of Congress Teacher's Guides and Analysis Tool: <http://www.loc.gov/teachers/usingprimarysources/guides.html>

Little Shell Tribe: <http://www.littleshelltribe.us>



Montana's Landless Indians and the Assimilation Era of Federal Indian Policy: A Case of Contradictions  
**Additional Resources** *(continued)*

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Michif Historical & Cultural Preservation Society: The Michif Métis Museum in British Columbia:  
<http://www.michifmetismuseum.org/Home.html>

Montana Historical Society Research Center: <http://mhs.mt.gov/research.asp>

Montana Office of Public Instruction, Indian Education and Indian Education for All: <http://opi.mt.gov/Programs/IndianEd/Index.html>

*Montana: Stories of the Land*—Companion Website and Online Teachers Guide:  
<http://svcalt.mt.gov/education/Textbook/TextbookMainPage.asp>

*Montana: Stories of the Land*—TIMELINE: <http://svcalt.mt.gov/education/Textbook/Timeline/textbooktimeline.asp>

*Montana Tribal Histories: Educators Resource Guide and Companion DVD*: <http://opi.mt.gov/Programs/IndianEd/curricsearch.html> (Hint: Filter subject area of table to Cross-Curriculum and scroll to title.)

US Department of the Interior: Indian Affairs FAQs site—<http://www.bia.gov/FAQs/>

Virtual Museum of Métis History and Culture: Gabriel Dumont Institute of Native Studies and Applied Research: <http://www.metismuseum.ca/main.php>

# Montana's Landless Indians and the Assimilation Era of Federal Indian Policy: A Case of Contradictions



## Montana Common Core Content Standards

Montana's Landless Indians and the Assimilation Era of Federal Indian Policy: A Case of Contradictions (Lessons for Grades 7–12) is aligned with the following broad anchor Montana Common Core Standards:

### STANDARDS FOR LITERACY IN HISTORY/SOCIAL STUDIES, GRADES 6–12

#### College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Reading

(For grade-specific detail, see the Montana Office of Public Instruction website: [http://opi.mt.gov/Curriculum/montCAS/MCCS/index.php?gpm=1\\_3](http://opi.mt.gov/Curriculum/montCAS/MCCS/index.php?gpm=1_3))

#### Key Ideas and Details

1. Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.
2. Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.
3. Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.

#### Craft and Structure

4. Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.
5. Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.
6. Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.

#### Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

7. Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse formats and media, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.
8. Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.
9. Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.

#### Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity

10. Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.

**College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Writing, Grades 6–12**

(For grade specific detail, see the Montana Office of Public Instruction website: [http://opi.mt.gov/Curriculum/montCAS/MCCS/index.php?gpm=1\\_3](http://opi.mt.gov/Curriculum/montCAS/MCCS/index.php?gpm=1_3))

**Text Types and Purposes**

1. Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.
2. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

**Production and Distribution of Writing**

3. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

**Research to Build and Present Knowledge**

4. Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.
5. Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrate the information while avoiding plagiarism.
6. Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

**Range of Writing**

7. Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.



# Montana's Landless Indians and the Assimilation Era of Federal Indian Policy: A Case of Contradictions



## Essential Understandings Regarding Montana Indians

### Essential Understanding 1

There is great diversity among the 12 tribal nations of Montana in their languages, cultures, histories, and governments. Each nation has a distinct and unique cultural heritage that contributes to modern Montana.

### Essential Understanding 2

There is great diversity among individual American Indians as identity is developed, defined, and redefined by entities, organizations, and people. A continuum of Indian identity, unique to each individual, ranges from assimilated to traditional. There is no generic American Indian.

### Essential Understanding 3

The ideologies of Native traditional beliefs and spirituality persist into modern-day life as tribal cultures, traditions, and languages are still practiced by many American Indian people and are incorporated into how tribes govern and manage their affairs. Additionally, each tribe has its own oral histories, which are as valid as written histories. These histories pre-date the “discovery” of North America.

### Essential Understanding 4

Reservations are lands that have been reserved by the tribes for their own use through treaties, statutes, and executive orders and were not “given” to them. The principle that land should be acquired from the Indians only through their consent with treaties involved three assumptions:

- I. Both parties to treaties were sovereign powers.*
- II. Indian tribes had some form of transferable title to the land.*
- III. Acquisition of Indian lands was solely a government matter not to be left to individual colonists.*

### Essential Understanding 5

There were many federal policies put into place throughout American history that have affected Indian people and still shape who they are today. Many of these policies conflicted with one another. Much of Indian history can be related through several major federal policy periods:

*Colonization Period 1492–1800s*

*Treaty Period 1789–1871*

*Allotment Period 1887–1934 (Allotment and Boarding School Period 1879–1934)*

*Tribal Reorganization Period 1934–1958*

*Termination and Relocation Period 1953–1971*

*Self-determination 1968–Present*

**Essential Understanding 6**

History is a story most often related through the subjective experience of the teller. With the inclusion of more and varied voices, histories are being rediscovered and revised. History told from Indian perspectives frequently conflicts with the stories mainstream historians tell.

**Essential Understanding 7**

Under the American legal system, Indian tribes have sovereign powers, separate and independent from federal and state governments. However, the extent and breadth of tribal sovereignty is not the same for each tribe.